

S O C R A T E S,

A

DRAMATIC POEM.

By AMYAS BUSHE, Esq; A. M. K

And Fellow of the ROYAL SOCIETY.



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M D C C L V I I I .

SECRET

DRAMATIC FORM

BY ALFRED BUSH, M.A.
OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY

39.
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TO the RIGHT HONOURABLE

GEORGE Lord LYTTELTON,
BARON of FRANKLY.

My LORD,

SOCRATES through many ages has been kindly received by all persons of virtue, learning, and taste; your Lordship has already paid him particular marks of your regard in his present character and dress; your approbation of this dramatic poem, is my strongest encouragement to offer it to the public; mere amusement, and to fill up an interval of leisure and solitude, were, I confess, my first inducements to attempt this performance; I could not then think of making it public, tho' some few friends of learning and judgment gave me their favourable opinion of it; but altho' this somewhat gratified my vanity, yet it was not a sufficient motive to induce me to a publication, without applying to, and soliciting your Lordship to peruse it, being well assured, that if you thought it tolerable, I had not much to dread from any reader of candour and ingenuity: I was ambitious of so high a sanction, and I am happy in the enjoyment of it---But your Lordship's further indulgence to Socrates, in pointing at, and proscribing several inaccuracies, redundancies, and other infirmities of the work, and above all, in taking him under your protection, at a time when learning and virtue meet

A 2

with

with such cold hospitality from the world, has in a great degree grafted this poem on the rich stock of your own high reputation; as a scyon that may draw from the fostering influence of your fame, no small nourishment and support; your laurels will, (contrary to the qualities of most others) not only insure immortality and vigour to themselves, but preserve life and verdure to any tender sprigs which they vouchsafe to shelter. Give me leave, my Lord, to return you my sincere thanks for the favour you do me, in permitting this dedication of Socrates to you; it will be the greatest literary honour to my name, to be seen in company with your's by latest posterity: your's, my Lord, can die but with the English language, and some of it's truest honours and ornaments exemplified in all your poetic works, and with the Christian religion, so nobly supported by you in your argument on the conversion of St. Paul: as to my own, I have as yet no insurance against it's mortality, except your kind opinion and protection of this little work, calculated you know for the closet, and not for the stage. Whatever it's merit or demerit may be, it will have a fairer and more dispassionate trial, than most pieces exhibited can expect to meet with. I shall trespass upon your patience, by once more recommending this tender, and first-published offspring of my fancy, to your friendly adoption and patronage, and to assure you, that I am, my Lord, with the greatest esteem and respect,

Your Lordship's most obliged

and most obedient humble Servant,

Amyas Bushe.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE system and sentiments employed in the following poem, whether moral or metaphysical, are no farther embraced by the author, nor recommended to the reader, than as they agree with sound morality and christian principles: they are considered as the nearest approaches made by uninspired reason, to that perfect dispensation, which the gospel affords to mankind. The name of Socrates will in some measure sanctify the doctrine he delivers; his catastrophe will be a signal and illustrious instance, both of the depravity and excellence of human nature. It is with the view to introduce the knowledge of this wonderful man, and his system, to those, whose want of leisure, and different pursuits, have prevented them from studying the dead languages, that he comes abroad in this dress, to entertain (we hope) and instruct the reader, to whose candour and favour we venture to submit him.

To

TO AMYAS BUSHE, Esq; on his Dramatic POEM on
the death of SOCRATES.

By an unknown hand.

THE half-evangeliz'd, inspired store
Of sacred Socrates---his heaven-taught lore
Informs with dignity divine your lays ;
There pagan truths with christian fervor blaze,
The gospel's harbinger, who shone so bright,
With more than ethic rays, than nature's light
His lamp was rais'd---with more than mortal flame
His soul was fir'd, from heaven it's lustre came ;
From thence his meekness sprung, his stedfast mind,
Which throws all vain philosophy behind ;
All technic arrogance, all stoic pride,
And false presumption, ever wand'ring wide
From virtue's genuine path, whose wisdom trod
The path of purity, the way to God.
There Socrates a human saviour went,
And taught mankind to tremble and repent ;
There shone the hallow'd sage---in your strong lines
Intrinsic energy, and greatness shines :
Here strength of soul, the man divine appears,
By rigid power oppress'd, oppress'd by years,
By deadly rancour smote, by fraud pursu'd,
See rancour, fraud, by Socrates subdu'd ;
His virtue conquers all, all rage defies,
His virtue triumphs, triumphs as he dies ;

O glorious task ! mere mortal man to try,
 Could unassisted nature climb so high !
 Your hand each sentiment sublime could trace
 With native strength, simplicity and grace ;
 Your well-directed thought the pile could plan,
 And raise once more to view the godlike man,
 Erect, admir'd, as when all Athens wept,
 And widow'd Virtue mournful vigils kept ;
 Your hand can fill, and strike the soul with awe,
 And Socrates with equal virtue draw.

Dramatis

[iv]

Dramatis Personæ.

SOCRATES.

HERMOGENES.

CHORUS.

ARISTODEMUS.

Chorus of æthereal SPIRITS.

PRESIDENT.

JUDGES.

MELITUS.

OFFICER of Court.

CRITO.

PHÆDO.

CEBES.

GOALER.

SCENE, Athens.

SOCRATES.

S O C R A T E S,

A

D R A M A T I C P O E M.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

S C E N E, S O C R A T E S's house.

S O C R A T E S solus.

MY shield, my breast-plate, virtue has put on,
Let envy's hostile darts assault in vain
This firm-collected soul, I feel that strength,
That fortitude serene, which honesty
Alone can give the mind, that never lodg'd
Presumption vain, hypocrisy, nor pride
Within it's secret cells; nor public fraud,
Nor ostentation vile, nor sensual views
Abhorr'd, nor impious thoughts against the gods---
Integrity! thou citadel secure,
Thou bulwark of the soul---invincible!
Intrench my heart around with conscious strength,
Becoming dignity, and just disdain
Of imputations foul, and horrid crimes:
I feel an inspiration from above
Invigorate, and sublime my inward frame,

B

And

2 S O C R A T E S,

And *raise* my spirits up---there is---there is---
Socrates shall live for ever---I feel
An active and immortal principle;
I shall be justified above the stars
Among the bless'd, at heaven's great tribunal,
O energy divine! I feel the God
Inspiring comfort.

Enter HERMOGENES.

HERMOGENES.

Hail! great holy sage

Of aspect venerable, tho' the trace
Of wasteful years and soul-employing thought
Sit furrow'd on thy brow! if disengag'd
From private cares, let now the rosy morn
Invite thy steps abroad to yonder shades,
Where oft thy moral doctrines clear'd some truth,
Some heavenly truth, and check'd the stream
Of a licentious age; go forth once more
In thy integrity, let wisdom's force
Direct and bless mankind.

SOCRATES.

Hail, worthy friend!

For ever present to my inmost thoughts
When best employ'd, come, sit thee down a while;
Thy visit is well tim'd---just as thou enter'd,
My soul was full intent on virtue's charms
In beauty's form array'd; for, she shines
As do aerial shapes that bring to men

Some

A Dramatic P O E M.

3

Some high behests from heav'n, and on my mind
Beams radiant light, such as pure spirits feel
When disengag'd from earth they wing their way
To happy mansions.

HERMOGENES.

Noble ~~are~~ the thoughts
Which thus employ thy mind, oppress'd by ills.
And injur'd by thy thankless countrymen ;
Ungrateful Athens---ages yet to come---
But thy exalted mind with pity looks
On those confederates ; you feel for them.
A father's anger when they most offend.
Fain would I view those truths by thee display'd.
In all their native charms, from thy clear mind.
Truths flow like oracles.

SOCRATES.

'Tis wisdom's task
To rise against misrule's oppressive power,
And conquer calumny with virtue's force ;
Th' Athenians yet may feel, perhaps confess
That Socrates deserv'd a better fate ;
But heaven's decrees must over all prevail,
And innocence must learn to suffer wrongs---
Know, beauty is a pure ethereal ray
Of fair celestial make, that issues forth
From the sole fount of light, and lustre spreads
Thro' air and earth and heaven : old ocean feels
The influence of it's beam : when tempests fly
They bear it on their wings : the firmament
Radiant with starry orbs, light above light

B 2.

In



S O C R A T E S,

In lucid order rais'd, aloud proclaims
The fair original---

HERMOGENES.

The works of God

Indeed are great, and shew a wond'rous hand
Which gave them thus to shine ; but still remains
What I most long to know, how virtue wears
Fair beauty's form, and as you seem'd to hint
Differs but in the name.

SOCRATES.

Beauties that shine

In the material world, are certain laws
Impress'd on natural things, by the great God
Of nature, furnish'd with peculiar powers
To actuate their being, by which they move
To their respective ends ; nor do they want
A higher rule, as they can never swerve
From what is beautiful : but man is rais'd
High in the scale of beings, and inform'd
With intellectual faculties that shew
The beauty of the mind, by which he claims
Relation to his Maker, and partakes
Of rectitude divine : hence, moral acts
Which flow from reason, and obsequious will,
Are beautiful and good, because with God
Similitude they hold, whose sacred will,
Pure as his essence, never can divert
From what is right, and is itself the law
Which we call nat'ral, as He, only, rules
As well the moral as material world.

HERMOGENES.

HERMOGENES.

Great are thy sentiments, thou sage divine,
 And rest on principles that bear the test
 And scrutiny of reason. He who form'd
 The sum of things, to every part assign'd
 Beauty and order, suited to the kinds
 Of their respective natures, as a law
 To rule their actions; but on man he stamp'd
 An image of himself, by which he moves
 To moral ends by intellectual means.

[EX. HER.]

H Y M N to Beauty and Virtue.

Semichorus 1.

Hail sacred source of heav'n and earth!
 From thee fair beauty takes her birth:
 Whate'er in prospect charms the eye,
 From thee receives its pleasing dye:
 From thee, Apollo gilds the ray
 That ushers in the new-born day:
 From thee, the moon with borrow'd light
 Supplies the silver lamp of night:
 From thee, fair Iris paints her bow
 Where all thy varied colours glow:
 Form'd by thy hand, does nature spread
 A flow'ry carpet o'er the mead:
 From thee the face of earth is seen
 Array'd in chearful robes of green:
 What blossoms on the fragrant tree
 Derives th' impatient buds from thee:

What

What sparkles in the diamond shows
 The brighter fount from which it flows :
 All that can please in earth or air
 Is but of thee a copy fair :
 Thy beauty fills the world with light,
 Which without thee, would sink in night.

Semichorus 2.

But beauty, in the moral way,
 Shines with a brighter purer ray !
 Distinct the living lines appear ;
 The colours strong, the image clear,
 Not fairer seen, nor yet more like
 The objects from the mirror strike :
 There, fortitude and prudence shine,
 Beaming with radiance divine :
 Here awful justice holds her scales,
 Her pure decrees impartial deals :
 There the firm patriot pleads the cause
 Of merit, rais'd on virtue's laws ;
 And here, th' immoral villain bleeds,
 Unpitied, for nefarious deeds.

Chorus.

Beauty and virtue are the same ;
 They differ, only in the name.
 What to the soul is pure and bright
 Is beauty in a moral light ;
 And what to sense does charms convey
 Is beauty in the nat'ral way :

Each

A Dramatic P O E M.

7

Each from one source it's essence draws,
And both conform to nature's laws.

S C E N E II.

S O C R A T E S solus.

It cannot be--for since this beauteous world
Was rais'd by God, his Providence must rule
The vast machine--Chance is an idle toy
For fools to play with--Should fixt nature change
Her well-known course, and vary from the laws
That guide the system: should the elements,
Whereof all things in this our lower world
Are form'd, desert the station which they hold,
In concert with the whole: should the great frame
Of that bright heavenly arch, which o'er our heads
Shines with refulgent light, give way, and feel
A dissolution: should celestial spheres
Forget their wonted course, and devious turn
As chance misguides: should the bright lamp of heaven
Withdraw his light, and the pale wand'ring moon
Mistake her well-known path: should seasons mix
In wild confusion, or expiring winds
Breathe their last gasp: should earth's fair fruitage droop
Like children on the wither'd breasts that fail
Of proper food: should chance or fortune reign
With arbitrary sway: what would become
Of man himself, for whom these things are made?
Idle surmise! There is a living God
Who rules supreme, under whose brooding wing
All nature rests secure.

Enter

Enter ARISTODEMUS.

SOCRATES.

Welcome my friend !

I hope, Aristodemus, no new doubts
Concerning God and Providence, disturb
The quiet of thy mind.

ARISTODEMUS.

Till clearer thoughts

Have calm'd the tumult of a working soul,
It cannot rest, but like a rolling ship
Toft on tempestuous waves, resigns the helm
That should direct it's course, and feels the force
Of rising doubts, which like fierce-warring winds
From divers quarters, agitate the soul
With anxious thoughts that violate the peace
And quiet of the mind---O Socrates !
That thinking principle I feel within me
Is ever on the rack.

SOCRATES.

Come, let us view

Once more the matter in fair points of light,
And then let reason judge. Can'st thou perceive
How causes operate ? what latent springs
Move nature's works ? know'st thou, what rounds the hail,
Or points the flaming dart ? how the hoar frost
Is form'd of pearly dew ? how icy chains
Restrain the fluid mass, and stay the course
Of limpid streams, that wont to glide along

In

In liquid lapse? or, grant that you could view
 Nature's recess, and see the hidden wheels
 By which things move, and operate with ease;
 Are they at thy disposal? canst thou wing
 The feather'd snow? or bid the brushing winds
 Sweep the aerial way? canst thou dispose
 Of seasons and their change? do elements
 Of jarring atoms form'd, at thy command
 In friendly league combine? or day and night
 Alternate reign? And yet all nature moves
 By certain laws that rule the vast machine
 In each degree of change, and speak a power
 That gives it motion, and directs the parts
 To their respective ends; for things inert
 Could never act, without a living soul
 To give them energy: were it no so,
 The orbs of heav'n would cease to roll, the air
 Forget to breathe, and earth refuse to yield
 Her various fruits.

ARISTODEMUS.

Amazing are the laws
 That rule the universe, and keep the world
 In order just!--my thoughts have been employ'd
 On other things.

SOCRATES.

What can employ your thoughts
 With so much pleasing joy, as thus to view
 The works of God? does not the genial sun
 Warm and invigorate all things on earth
 Fervent with life of every goodly kind,

C

And

And shew them too? but as the human frame
 Is form'd of mould terrestrial which perspires
 Much of its vital heat, have not the gods
 Ordain'd the night for rest, to give fresh springs
 To life and labour? and when evening ray
 Dips in the shade, is not the firmament
 Bedeck'd with lights, that run their wonted round
 In circles multiform? anon shines forth
 The splendid regent of the night, array'd
 In silver robes, and paints in soften'd shades
 All nature's charms; till the bright orient sun
 Slow-gleaming thro' the dark and cloudy dusk
 By fair Aurora led---again revives
 The face of things, and bids the lamps of night
 Withdraw their ray: is this oeconomy
 A proof of Providence? or does it speak
 The laws of chance?

ARISTODEMUS.

O Socrates, you speak
 Of things inanimate which must be mov'd
 By some external force; but I would chuse
 To hear your thoughts of essences, that act
 And move at will.

SOCRATES.

Thither I did intend
 To bend my way, had not your hasty mind
 Check'd my discourse, and broke the chain of thought
 I meant to hold---Say then, are not some men
 For wisdom deem'd superior to the rest
 Of human kind?

A Dramatic P O E M.

11

ARISTODEMUS.

Yes doubtless ; Homer stands
For ever foremost in the roll of fame
For epic strains ; and Sophocles high rais'd
In bulkins trod ; the forming chizzel grac'd
The hand of Polyclete ; and living lines
From Zeuxis' pencil flow'd.

SOCRATES.

Say then, my friend,
Are they, who images of things express,
Of mind and motion void ; or they who gave
Spirit and energy to what they raise
In living form, most worthy to be held
In admiration ?

ARISTODEMUS.

Doubtless, living forms
By far excell ; for living forms arise
Not from blind chance, but wise and deep design
Which spring from reason ; and the works express
The final cause to which they owe their frame.

SOCRATES.

Does not the being then, whose boundless thought
First plann'd man's frame, so wonderfully made,
So curious and so fearful ; and dispens'd
The active powers of thought and motion, seem
To have directed all it's various parts
To useful ends ? was not th' insatiate eye
With all its coats, made porous to receive
And drink the limpid light ? does not the ear
Admit the floating sound ? is it not stor'd

With organs fit to move the hearing sense,
 Which by the fibres of the brain conveys
 Sounds to the soul ? or why should nature breathe
 This gay profusion of luxurious sweets
 This odorific bliss, had not the wise,
 Th' unerring power of the creative hand
 Prepar'd the organs to imbibe the stream
 That fragrant floats in fields of liquid air ?
 Or how from viands could such tastes arise
 Acid or sweet, did not the tongue explore
 Their various juices, and the palate chuse
 What is most grateful ?

ARISTODEMUS.

Wond'rous is the frame
 Of man, and seems to speak the hand divine
 Which rais'd the system.

SOCRATES.

Let us farther view
 The human frame, and we shall clearly trace
 Strong lines of Providence---Has it not skreen'd
 The tender ball of sight with moving lids
 That open to the light ? and when the dew
 Of sleep steals on the eyes, do they not fall
 Like a soft veil ? are not their pliant valves
 Which shut and open, edg'd with fringe of hair
 To guard against the wind that with rude blast
 Might fret the ball ? are not the eye-brows form'd
 Like a fair penthouse, to cast off the drops
 That trickle down the front, and would annoy
 The seat of sight ? does not the hearing sense

Receive

Receive all kind of sound, and yet the ear
Is never full ? Is not thy living frame
A portion small of the great mass, which forms
Th' amazing sum ? is not that frame sustain'd
By intellectual powers, which cannot rise
From matter void of sense ? By sequel fair
Should you not thence infer, that intellect,
Forecast, and wisdom, from some power flow,
As from a source of pure celestial light,
Which shews the moral world to reason's eye,
And gives it lustre.

ARISTODEMUS.

Yes ; these seem the works
Of art and counsel : but, what human eye
The artists ever saw ? who knows the tools
With which they work ? or what relation bear
Things incorporeal to material forms ?

SOCRATES.

Can you, Aristodemus, see the soul
Which animates the man ? Is not the spring
That moves and actuates the whole machine,
Conceal'd from view ? and yet, you seem to act
With counsel and design. Thus, He, who schem'd
This world immense, presides and rules
By secret laws ; Himself invisible
To mortal ken, whom yet we fairly trace
In his material works, which all declare
A power divine. Say, when you gaze direct,
Full on the sun, is not the radiant orb
Lost in the blaze of light ? and yet the sun

Paints

Paints heav'n and earth to view. When thunder peals
 Thro' the aerial vault, is not the bolt
 Hurl'd on unseen, tho' visible the signs
 It leaves behind? or, when fierce warring winds
 Spread desolation round, can you discern
 The wings with which they fly, tho' nature speak
 Their rapid force? And if there's aught in man
 That does resemble God; it is the soul
 Which guides all parts, yet cannot be discern'd
 By sharpest eye. Cease then to doubt of things
 Latent from sight, and to deny a God
 Because you cannot see him with an eye
 To mortals given.

ARISTODEMUS.

You seem, sage Socrates,
 To reason right; and I would gladly pay
 Devotion to the gods, were their chief care
 Employ'd on men: but do not men live here
 In common with the brutes, who all enjoy
 The powers you speak of, in a high degree,
 Higher perhaps than we?

SOCRATES.

Can you conceive
 That gods are careless of the general good
 Of human kind, when you must own that man
 Is of all creatures that respire in air,
 Alone of frame erect, ordain'd to view
 The azure round, whether the sun by day
 Heaven's vault illumine, or the spangling stars
 Glitter by night? are not the optic lights,

Which

Which view all nature in her finest dress,
 Plac'd in the highest region of the frame
 Objects remote to see, like centinels
 In a watch-tow'r, to guard against approach
 Of dangers from abroad ? while reptiles creep
 Along the ground, or draw a sinuous train
 Of many a fold ; and others, range the wilds,
 Or browse the flow'ry mead, on feet that serve
 No other end than to conduct their frame
 Of aspect prone : have not the gods benign
 Furnish'd the human race with hands and arms
 Plac'd near the seat of sight, by faultless skill
 Fitted for useful ends ?

ARISTODEMUS.

I know no ends
 They mean to serve, than what the brutes pursue
 Without their aid : do they not live at will,
 And propagate their kinds ? what more could men
 With boasted hands ?

SOCRATES.

Aristodemus, judge,
 How without hands, could fruits be rais'd to feed
 These weakly frames, and keep the mould'ring clay
 From falling into dust ? or how could cloaths
 Be made to guard against the bitter blast
 Of rigid cold, or the fierce flaming fires
 Of solar ray ? could houses, made for ends
 Of necessary use, spontaneous rise
 And settle into order ? could the ox
 Bleed at the altar, to appease the gods.

And

And make atonement, without hands to fell
 And dress the sacrifice? do not the hands
 Make marble breathe, and canvass speak the deeds
 Of deathless heroes, and transmit their fame
 To future ages? are not these strong proofs
 Of God's peculiar care of human kind?

ARISTODEMUS.

You reason like a thief---I can hear
 Your arguments with pleasure; but perhaps
 They may not prove conclusive in the end.

SOCRATES.

Are not all other animals depriv'd
 Of speech and elocution? but in man
 The tongue is form'd to vocal sound, and speaks
 The language of the mind, whence all the sweets
 Of converse flow, for words express to sense
 All such ideas as the soul receives
 From outward objects, latent else to ken
 Of reason's eye; for the soul cannot think
 Without materials fit, whereon to raise
 It's speculations.

ARISTODEMUS.

What? do not all brutes
 In sounds dissimilar their sense convey
 When fear, or pain, the beating heart assails,
 Or when their bosoms with warm pleasure glow?
 Is not the neighing of a horse express'd
 In varied sound, when in the bloom of life
 Florid and fresh, he wantons o'er the plains,
 Stung with the fervour of a youthful love?

Or

Or when from nostrils wide he darts the flame
 Of kindling war, and snuffs the blaze of arms?
 Do not the feather'd kind, of varied plume,
 Vary their strain, as rising passions swell
 The heaving breast? other the notes, which hawks
 Or eagles use; as quest of food, or fight,
 Directs the sound: when flying near to land
 The full-gorg'd cormorant forsakes the deep,
 And sends his screams before him to the beach;
 Other his tone, than when with level wing
 He skims the surface of the briny wave.
 Many of plummy race oft' change their notes,
 As temperatures of air or weather change:
 The tempest-loving raven, and the crow
 Intelligent of seasons, brooding clouds
 With hoarser throat demand, and with fell croak
 The gathering storms, and rising winds foretell.

SOCRATES.

'Tis true, Aristodemus, that as brutes
 Of reason void, are influenc'd by sense;
 They oft' their fears, or fond desires express
 By inarticulate sounds, as appetite
 Or sense directs, when strong instinctive powers
 Of nature animal, exert their force
 And agitate the frame: so, nature speaks,
 And nature is their law, who never swerves
 From the first rules her Maker first impress'd
 On creatures mov'd by sense. But man is form'd
 Of a superior nature made to suit
 His intellectual faculties, that soar

D

Beyond

Beyond the verge of sense, and raise the soul
 To lofty thoughts, which when reduc'd
 Into true order by the settling mind,
 He can express in words that are the types
 Which give subsistence sure to his ideas
 Regularly laid. Hence, man with man
 Can conversation hold, or joyous hymn
 With vocal symphony their Maker's praise,
 Like spirits glorified who sweetly tune
 The spheres to harmony; or mutual lend
 And borrow reason, as the sister moon
 From Phœbus draws her rays, which she again
 Diffuses thro' the vault of heaven, to gild
 The dreary face of night---This is the state
 Of man ordain'd for high and noble ends.

ARISTODEMUS.

O Socrates! my soul begins to feel
 The force of heavenly truth---go on, great sage,
 To clear the argument with stronger proof,
 And let conviction still reform my mind,
 By thee impress'd with dignity of thought.

SOCRATES.

Let us investigate with farther search
 The human nature in a higher light,
 That point of view, wherein man joyous claims
 Relation to his Maker: for is not man
 Alone of living things on earth, endued
 With mind and soul, by which he clearly knows
 That God exists, and that he rais'd a world
 For this his favourite creature; yet requires

No

No other tribute than a grateful mind
 To holy adoration train'd, and pure
 Conceptions of the Deity, supreme
 O'er gods and men, who with his essence fills
 Th' extended universe, thus wond'rous fair,
 Himself how wond'rous then ! unspeakable,
 And veil'd amid the lustre which surrounds
 His glorious throne, too dazzling to be seen
 By mortal eye : that pleasure is reserv'd
 For righteous men ; for when this brittle frame
 Of finer mould by which the soul performs
 Her operations, shall dissolve and mix
 With genial earth, the heav'n-born soul springs forth
 And freely mingles in the blest abodes.

ARISTODEMUS.

My soul relents---From what you have advanc'd ;
 Of consequence I clearly can allow,
 That men live here like demigods and reign
 Over inferior beings ; and when death
 Removes this cloud, the intellectual part
 Shall still subsist.

SOCRATES.

Your inference is right :
 This beauteous world, with all the breathing tribes
 That move in air, or earth, or seas, was rais'd
 To serve the use of man, while here he lives
 His destin'd time : but when the cumbrous load
 Which presses down the soul, that particle
 Of air divine which animates the frame,
 And wings the mind to contemplations high,

Shall cease to act, and is by death resolv'd
 To it's first principles ; then shall the soul,
 For ever sever'd from material mould,
 Feel virtue's quick'ning power and heavenly light.

ARISTODEMUS.

I see your reasons in united force ;
 And find my soul inclin'd to think, that gods
 Take care of man : one doubt unsatisfy'd
 Disturbs me still---Is not man left to tread
 A mazy round, where doubts to doubts succeed
 In wild confusion mixt, without a clue
 To guide his steps, and lead him to the bower
 Where virtue, heav'nly goddesses rich array'd
 In her celestial robes, presiding, rules
 The moral world, by laws too darkly plan'd
 To be distinctly seen ? Why do not gods
 By ministerial agency convey
 Their will to men, that they may clearly view
 The lines of duty, and pursue the path
 That leads where moral rectitude is found ?

SOCRATES.

Does not, Aristodemus, the fair code
 Of nature's laws, voluminous and vast,
 Lie open to your eye ? May not you read
 The marks of shame and turpitude impress'd
 On every vice, and trace the heav'nly charms
 That shine on virtue's brow, pleasing as light
 That issues from the sun ? are you not mov'd
 By nature's impulse, to admire the garb
 Which beauty wears, and to avert the eye

From foul deformities, whatever shape
Or colour they assume?

ARISTODEMUS.

All this is true
Of beauteous nature, when she means to please
The curious eye, and to present herself
In best attire; but what analogy
Do nature's beauties, which affect the seat
Of sense corporeal, bear to the charms
Of moral virtue, which remote from sight
Lie latent in the mind?

SOCRATES.

Come; bend your thoughts
To moral and material light, and see.
The fair analogy: material light
Flows from the source of day, and paints the world
In various bloom; before it fly the clouds
Shot thro' with orient beam, and the blue vault
Of heaven shines: the moral is a ray
Of rectitude divine, which gives the mind
To view ideal beauties, only seen
By reason's eye. As the material light
Warms and invigorates the genial seeds
Which nature sows, and brings them forth to life
Florid and fair; so does the moral ray,
By an etherial influence raise to life
True virtue's seeds, congenial to the soul
When first it felt the forming hand that rais'd
The moral system.

ARIS-

ARISTODEMUS.

This is stated right,
And I assent : but still in what respect
Do moral and material light consist
With divination ? I would have the gods
Tell me in every act, what suits the state
Of intellectual beings ? what is rais'd
From reason's laws ? and what we must derive
From a superior aid, which we express
By divination ?

SOCRATES.

When th' almighty God
By ministerial agents, form'd to speak
His ruling will, answers the humble suit
Of the Athenian state, if reason fails
To give a final sentence ; can you think
He does not speak to you ? or when to Greeks
Taken at large, or to the human kind,
However scatter'd o'er the face of earth,
He sends his solemn portents to denounce
What shall hereafter happen, or what now
Is fittest to be done ; can you imagine
That you alone, of all the human race,
Lie quite exempted from his special care ?
Can you conceive that gods would plant in man
An innate notion, that they can dispense
Or pain or pleasure, if in real fact
They want the power to do so ? or that men
Should be so long deceiv'd, without least sense
Of the delusion ? must you not confess

That

That realms and cities, which have foremost stood
 In the records of fame, for arts polite
 And wisdom's lore renown'd, have ever held
 The gods in veneration high, and rais'd
 Temples and altars sacred to the use
 Of rites divine? and still the farther back
 You cast your eye on ages more remote,
 Do not you find that divination reign'd
 With stronger force, and deeper fix'd the sense
 Of watchful Providence?

ARISTODEMUS.

What! can the God
 You call supreme, reside above the spheres,
 Yet rule the world with universal sway,
 And keep each individual in his view?
 This seems a paradox, which wants a proof---

SOCRATES.

You know, Aristodemus, that the soul,
 By active power the body moves, and guides
 With arbitrary rule, and keeps the nerves
 In proper tension, which by secret springs
 Play on the muscles: hence, can sense perceive
 What is impress'd, and to the soul convey
 The images, from which it raises plans
 Of truth and science: must not therefore God
 Who schem'd this system, and whose essence fills
 Th' unbounded universe, at will direct,
 And rule the settled whole by secret laws
 Which operate unseen, beyond the verge
 Of human sense? does not your eye extend

To

To half the firmament, and clearly see
 Objects remote, transmitted thro' the thin
 Pellucid air? and cannot God, whose eye
 No darkness veils, with undivided view
 Pervade the universe, and see the parts
 Of things in embryo, ere the plastic powers
 Have perfected the work? is not the spark
 Divine which moves the intellectual powers
 To think and act, with as much ease employ'd
 On things in Egypt, or in Sicily,
 As well as here? does it not wing it's way
 As swift as lightning? and can He, who reigns
 Sole universal Lord of heaven and earth
 Be circumscrib'd? He, to whom men apply
 In every place? He, whose all-hearing ear
 Yields free attention to the humble suit
 Of a meek heart, in solemn form address'd
 To the sole Father of the gods and men
 And beings of all kinds?

ARISTODEMUS.

O Socrates,

You reason right! the being who contriv'd
 This beauteous world, is only visible
 In these his works, which speak the powerful hand
 That gave them birth. My mind is quite at ease,
 And I imbibe the sacred stream of truth
 Which from thy soul with heav'nly wisdom flows.

[Exit ARIST.]

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

All nature's works aloud proclaim
The great Creator's glorious name,
Where'er we turn the thinking mind,
The traces of his care we find.
At his command, who rules the spheres,
And here in various forms appears,
Alternate roll the day and night,
One for rest, and one for light:
And as the year-directing sun
Does thro' the signs his journey run,
The seasons in successive train
Vicissitude of rule maintain:
Now, Zephyrus and Flora spread
Ambrosial odors o'er the mead:
Now, Ceres does her harvest yield,
And paint with wavy gold the field:
Now Autumn his ripe fruitage shows,
And drunk with wine the vintage flows:
Now, winter's frost and nitrous snow
Prepare the way for vernal blow:
Each, as the year revolves, profuse
Of blessings given for human use.
Consider how the sun retires
And gradually withdraws his fires;
Lest sudden cold should chill the blood,
And check too soon the circling flood:
And how with gentle pace and flow,
His radiant beam begins to glow;

E

Lest

Left tortur'd sense too soon should feel
The fervor of his rapid wheel,
Ere rising gradual in his strength,
He shoots his ray to utmost length:
Thus, from each tropic does he turn,
Nor prone to freeze, nor prone to burn:
Is this retreat, and this advance,
The work of Providence or chance?
Sage Socrates has gain'd the field,
And made Aristodemus yield:
Aristodemus, too, is blest;
His mind serene, his soul at rest.

A C T II. S C E N E I.

S C E N E, SOCRATES'S house.

SOCRATES solus.

I FEEL a firmness in my heart that speaks
 All shall be well—the Deity, on whom
 My soul depends, and who informs my mind
 To think and judge aright, * restrain'd my will
 When twice I strove to make a fair defence—
 Hence do I clearly learn, that God decrees
 From this corporeal pris'n I should be freed.
 Parent of all things! what I hold is thine:
 Chiefly th' intellectual part, whose being,
 Of thy divinity true semblance bears.

Enter HERMOGENES.

HERMOGENES.

Hail venerable sage! thy visage seems
 To wear the smile of ease; and shew a mind
 Serene and calm.

SOCRATES.

The mind can never want
 True-tasted joys, when disengag'd from earth
 And mean pursuits, in search of truths sublime
 Fair beauty charms, in her moral lustre.

* Xen. in Apol.

E 2

HERMOGENES.

HERMOGENES.

Thy soul, great Socrates, is ever bent
 On meditations deep, which merit praise
 From gods and men : but I beseech thee think
 Of making thy defence ; full well you know
 The sentence is gone forth, and thou shalt stand
 A fiery trial ; thy accusers hold
 Close consultation ; and the time is fix'd
 When the court sits to hear the heavy charge.

SOCRATES.

Know then, my friend, if innocence can plead
 A righteous cause, I am prepar'd to stand
 The strictest scrutiny. For my whole life
Alone is my defence.

HERMOGENES.

O Socrates !

Athenian judges by persuasive arts
 Of eloquence misled, do oft acquit
 The greatest criminal ; as oft' condemn
 The innocent to death.

SOCRATES.

Let rage discharge
 It's hottest bolts ; I can sustain the shock,
 Intrepid and unmov'd ; fixt as the laws
 Of Him who reigns above : his will is just
 And therefore shall be mine

HERMOGENES.

Thy sentiments
 Are truly great, and shew in native light
 The dignity of man : but, tho' thy mind

Be

Be resolute and firm, do not the gods
Approve of human means, to save a life
Which only they can give ?

SOCRATES.

If He who sits
Supreme o'er gods and men, permit the laws
To lay this body waste ; it is no more
Than what I owe to death, which soon will strike
The final blow. Was not this earth-born frame
I bear about me made to feel decay,
And suffer change ? the soul is Socrates ;
And that shall never die : 'tis now on wing
To meet the blessing which my God decrees.

HERMOGENES.

O Socrates ! the law of nature soon
Will close the scene of life, and thou shalt fall
Like mellow fruit that from a goodly tree
Drops in full age---do not anticipate
The fatal hour.

SOCRATES.

The Deity, who saw
How each fine thread in the fair web of life
Was wrought in nature's loom, ere yet the heart
Began to beat, or breathing lungs imbib'd
Th' expansive air ; that Deity, by whom
I think and act, knows when the spring of life
Should cease to play : and duty bids me pay
The debt of nature, when He makes the claim.

HERMOGENES.

HERMOGENES.

'Tis true, my Socrates---we must resign
Our lives on his demand ; but how can we
Foresee the point of time, wherein he means
To call us to account ?

SOCRATES.

That voice divine
That pure *etherial* Dæmon which restrains
My resolutions, when it finds they tend
To hurtful or immoral ends, forbade
That I should flee from justice, and the force
Of civil laws.

HERMOGENES.

Wond'rous indeed, the charge
Your Dæmon gave !

SOCRATES.

Are you surpriz'd, that God
Should know the season when I ought to leave
This house of clay, and soar to regions free
From pain and death ? Melitus may destroy,
But cannot hurt me ; what is Socrates
His malice cannot reach.

HERMOGENES.

O Socrates !

Thy life is worthy of the care of heaven ;
And if the God with-holds thee from defence
Of spotless innocence, he doubtless means
By other methods to prepare a way
For thy escape, and snatch thee from the hand
Of furious rage.

SOCRATES.

S O C R A T E S.

'Tis true, my friend, he means
 This frame should fall, while yet my thinking powers
 Are strong and clear, and the soul fit to mix
 With spirits void of guilt, that never feel
 The violence of force, but free as light
 Spontaneous move, obsequious to the laws
 That rule their being.

H E R M O G E N E S.

What you say is proof
 Of a superior state, on which your soul
 Seems too intent, ere yet the race of life
 Is fully run: you, train'd to virtue's lore
 Are ever ready to resign the life
 Your Maker gave you; but, O think, what loss
 Your friends shall suffer, when the living stream
 In which pure wisdom flow'd, shall be remov'd
 From public use! think how a wicked age
 Shall want your hand to hold the reins that rule
 The moral state! O! do but calmly think
 Of this catastrophe, and you will use
 All proper means to shun the snares that lie
 In wait for your destruction.

S O C R A T E S.

O, my friend!

My life's of import small; for what remains
 By nature's laws, I cannot call my own
 To any useful purpose of my being.
 Now I look back with pleasure on a life
 Well spent in virtue's cause; I can recall

Fresh

Fresh to the mind the reasons that support
 My moral precepts, and reveal the springs
 Of good and evil: now in connexion just,
 The laws which ought to rule this civil state
 Are full in view: but should more years roll o'er
 This tempest-beaten head, my harass'd mind
 Would lose it's force, as when the evening ray
 Is lost in night: the ranging eye would fail
 To view great nature's splendor, and the world
 Be one large blank: nor could the untun'd ear
 Imbibe the happy sounds, and taste the sweets
 Which flow from friendship's tongue: the soul unfit
 To cull ideas from a mingled mass,
 And shape them into form: the memory,
 Unable to retain, what erst I gain'd
 From choice reflections, made on nature's laws;
 From which, as from a treasury I drew,
 As moral virtue, or the public weal
 Requir'd my aid, still ready to expend
 All I could gather for the common good---
 This would Melitus own---did he not view
 My life with jaundic'd eyes: I therefore chuse
 To die, while joyous converse with my friends
 Shall spread a lustre o'er the gloomy hour.

HERMOGENES.

I wish I could prevail---O may the God
 On whom you place your confidence, support
 The merit of your cause, and guard a life
 Which wisdom honours, and which virtue loves.

[Exit HER.
 CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Hail happy sage, by men admir'd,
 And by a voice divine inspir'd!
 Thy courage does exalt the mind
 To notions high and thoughts refin'd.
 In all thy sentiments we view
 Something sublime, and something new.
 With heav'nly warmth thy virtue glows,
 And shews the source from which it flows.
 To thoughts of death you bravely yield,
 And conquer, when you lose the field,
 In haste to leave this clouded state,
 Eager to enter heaven's blest gate,
 Where objects new fresh joys dispense,
 And please the intellectual sense;
 Where the soul ranges with delight,
 And drinks th' eternal stream of light.

SCENE II. SOCRATES solus.

Methinks I feel uncommon spirits flow
 Thro' all my frame; and the soul-cheering voice,
 Whose kind monitions I most sacred deem,
 Tells me there is a place where all that now
 Seems so unequal here, shall be adjudg'd
 By weight unerring, as they higher rise,
 Or lower fall, in the celestial scales
 Of justice infinite, which shall award
 To each it's portion---Then shall Providence
 Reveal the springs that move the moral world;

F

And

And shall to merit or demerit deal
In just proportion, vengeance or reward---
Virtue, hail ! thy influence first reform'd
The savage mind, and from his dens and caves
Call'd forth untutor'd man, to bear the reins
Of civil rule ! from thee, as from their head,
Sprung love and friendship, and the social laws
From thee deriv'd their moral force ! one day
Spent in thy precepts, is to be preferr'd
To an eternity of vice !

Enter a Messenger from court.

MESSENGER.

All hail !

The court now awful sits ; and I am sent
To call thee forth to justice.

SOCRATES.

Is the court

Prepar'd to hear me ? Is Melitus there ?

MESSENGER.

He is---and ready to make good the charge
He brings against thee.

SOCRATES.

It may be so---

I'll follow thee.----O ! author of my life !
Sole self-existent essence, from whose power
All things derive their being, and whose hand
Sustains the universe ! be bounteous still
To give me what is good ! and should I sue

For

For what I ought not, be it thine to check
 The fond desire, and teach me how to pray
 For what I ought, how best I may pursue
 What best becomes the dignity of man
 Made for eternity : and thou sweet voice,
 Offspring of heav'n, that dost pursue my soul
 Thro' all it's turnings, let not fear of death
 Move me to plead, what may be found unfit
 For me to utter, or for God to hear !

Exit SOCR.

Chorus of etherial SPIRITS.

First SPIRIT.

I gave his mind with ease to move,

Second SPIRIT.

I fill'd it with celestial love,

First SPIRIT.

I gave him courage to impart
 The moral dictates of the heart.

Second SPIRIT.

I calm'd the temper of his brain,
 And made the passions all serene.

BOTH.

Sage Socrates can never stray
 From heav'n-born virtue's sacred way ;
 Or from the laws, which God design'd
 Should rule the motions of his mind.

A C T III. SCENE, The Tribunal.

PRESIDENT, JUDGES, MELITUS, SOCRATES.

MELITUS.

NOBLE Athenians, he, whom I arraign,
 Has introduc'd new gods, other than those
 Whom Athens worships ; and by subtle arts
 To him best known, does alienate the minds
 Of youth from firm attachment to the laws
 Of the Athenian state, by novel schemes
 Of virtue and religion, form'd to lay
 Our sacred rites aside ; and introduce
 Doctrines abhorrent from the sacred laws
 Of our forefathers, who were wont to teach
 That all the blessings we derive from heav'n
 Are owing to the gods, when each is serv'd
 By ministeries due and solemn rites
 According to his rank : but Socrates
 Talks high of inspiration, and a Dæmon
 Who brings him new behests from heav'n, and fills
 His mind with notions alien from the sense
 Of civil laws, and mysteries divine
 Which we hold sacred.

PRESIDENT.

Let the criminal
 Plead to the cause, if such a cause can bear
 The least defence.

First

First JUDGE.

It is a heavy charge
Which seems to carry death.

Second JUDGE.

But let the cause
Be fairly heard :---we sit on life and death.

ALL.

Let it be heard.

PRESIDENT.

Ye reverend sages,
Highly renown'd in the Athenian state,
For all the wisdom of the temper'd breast ;
We do not here convene in common form
To hear this single cause, but to support
The civil laws, and the religious rites
On which our state depends---be your debates
With calm investigation always rul'd.

SOCRATES.

O ye Athenians, I am summon'd here
To plead the cause of innocence and virtue---
This furrow'd front, and silver-shining hair
Confess my age : this country is my mother,
My father Athens' son ; here did I first
Imbibe th' enlivening air, and as fair truth,
As copious knowledge join'd with wisdom, flow'd
From learning's spring, I trac'd the living lines
Of virtue's laws, till seventy suns have roll'd
Their annual round---

MELITUS.

MELITUS.

O judges, bid him speak
Directly to the charge---this sophister
Has learn'd the art to change at will the modes
Of right and wrong, and make dark causes wear
A fair disguise.

SOCRATES.

Ye must, Athenians, know
That truth is sacred; and I call the * gods
Who rule this state to witness that I speak
The dictates of my heart, in language void
Of art or ornament; that best becomes
The orator, who pleads a labour'd cause
For fame or fortune; but that florid strain
Wears not the garb of truth, which should appear
In plain and simple dress---Melitus argues
That I suborn new gods, to overturn
The sacred rites, which have for ages past
Govern'd this state---Were this bold charge as true
As 'tis severe, I doubtless ought to feel
The rigour of the laws, and should resign.

* It may perhaps surprize the reader to meet several passages in this poem, where Socrates seems to acknowledge polytheism, though condemned for holding the unity of the Godhead; but this seeming admission he saw necessary to ingratiate himself with the people, in order to propagate his own doctrines, and wean them from their superstitious idolatry—he therefore complied with their outward ceremonies, by sacrificing (a) to the gods on the public altars; and by thus conforming to their modes of worship (b) he protected himself from the prosecution of the priesthood, and had frequent opportunities of conversing with the most considerable Athenians, and by his cogent arguments of gaining them over to the belief of one supreme, and only God.

(a) Xen. Memor.

(b) Plat. Apol.

My life a victim to appease the wrath
 Of injur'd heaven---But from what latent cause
 The charge should rise, that I have introduc'd
 Doctrines abhorrent from the sacred rites
 Of our forefathers, is a mystery
 I can't unveil : for on all festal days
 On public altars, and in solemn form,
 I pay my vows ; this might Melitus see
 In open day, did not pale envy cast
 A mist before his eyes. Or how can I
 Suborn new deities, when I have taught
 That a still voice from heaven inspires my soul
 With sacred thoughts, and tells me what is fit
 And proper to be done ? † They, who consult
 The notes of birds, or omens draw from men,
 Gather conjectures from the vocal sound,
 And act as that directs ; when thunders roll
 Thro' the aerial way, do not they speak
 With awful voice, and carry on their wings
 The fates of empires ? does not Pythia swell
 With sacred rage, and impulse not her own,
 When from the tripod of the Delphic god
 She speaks th' Almighty purpose ?---Now, that He
 Who rules supreme, can take a simple view
 Of all futurity, and see the fates
 Of things in embryo ; nations do confess
 As well as I : but then, while others hold
 That signs and omens of themselves portend
 Future events ; I teach they only act

† Xenoph. in Apol. Socr.

As

As ministerial agents that derive
 Their telling powers from God, whose voice alone
 All divination guides : for, even I,
 This Socrates, whom envy here arraigns,
 Have told my friends what good or bad effects
 Would from their conduct rise, should they pursue
 What was resolv'd ; and I was never found
 To err from truth.

[Here a tumult arises among the judges.]

MELITUS.

Now, Socrates, you see
 The judges are incens'd, and cannot yield
 Assent to what you say ; nor do they think
 That you are more in favour with the gods
 Than *they* who seem most worthy of their care---
 What arrogance ! does inspiration suit
 A mind like thine ?

SOCRATES.

If they will not believe
 What I assert ; I hope they will attend
 To what the oracle pronounc'd, when Chærephon,
 A friend to the Athenian state, enquir'd
 What the god thought of me, and many stood
 Prepar'd to hear the sacred voice aloud
 Proclaim my praise : and tho' our common friend
 Be now no more, * his brother is alive,
 And can attest the fact : let him come forth
 And speak his soul.

* Charocrates.

MELITUS.

MELITUS.

O judges! can ye bear
This insolence of tongue? no; now I see
The tumult rage.

SOCRATES.

Ye know, Athenians, this
Most solemn place should ever be attach'd
To sacred truth---hear me again, and learn
How little I assume---When he who form'd
The Spartan laws with humble suit address'd
Apollo's shrine; the Pythian stood suspense
Whether to hail Lycurgus as a god,
Or call him man: but me, in whom he found
No signs of deity, he only rais'd
High in the scale of prudence, and pronounc'd
That I in wisdom's lore by far excell'd
The human race; wisdom not mine, but given:
Nor have I plum'd myself with proud conceit,
Nor 'mongst my fellows borne my forehead high,
As conscious of superior worth of mind,
And more exalted knowledge; well I know
All talents rare, all rich accomplishments
Are given by God, to the possessor's trust,
For purposes of public weal alone,
With modesty and meekness best employ'd:
And if ye will but backward turn your eyes
On my past life, and view it's various scenes
In all their lights; perhaps ye may assent
To what the god declar'd; for from the time
Of early age, I labour'd to explore

G

The

The depths of reason; first indeed, I rang'd
The wide ethereal way, to trace the orbs
That various roll above, and measure times
In due proportion to the laws that rule
Their revolutions: but as this pursuit
Was dark and intricate, beyond the ken
Of reason's eye; 'twas I, who first brought down
Philosophy from heav'n, and made it shine
In courts and cities: I first taught the laws
That humanize the soul, and make it taste
The sweets of moral charms: I found the path
That leads where justice reigns, and fix'd the bounds
Of right and wrong: this does all Athens know,
Whose citizens in numbers flock to hear
My moral lectures, which I freely give
Without reward; while venal sophists sell
Their gilded bane, which taints the tender seeds
Of virtue ere they spring, and gives the mind
A turn to vice: have not I close pursu'd
Their specious wiles, and shewn the snares they spread
To catch unguarded souls? Athenians, say
If this be true; do not I merit praise
From gods and men? and that I speak the truth
Your silence is a proof. But I infer
That if we take the oracle aright,
It only deem'd me wisest of all men,
Because the narrow bounds of human minds
I best have known, and most have been convinc'd
That God alone is wise---But ye are told
That I corrupt the youth---can doctrines form'd

To

To meliorate the mind with manly sense,
 And give the soul to taste fair virtue's charms;
 Can dictates of this kind divert the thoughts
 Of giddy youth from paying due regard
 To civil institutes and sacred rites
 In veneration held?

MELITUS.

O Socrates!

The case is plain---for I could here produce
 Undoubted proofs, that by some artful wiles
 You gain the youth, and make them more obey
 You than their parents.

SOCRATES.

I confess the charge

You bring against me, and with ease can shew
 How wide you stray---Say, when disease or pain
 Assails the human frame, do parents mix
 The healing draught? does not the patient run
 To Æsculapius' sons for aid, who know
 The malady and cure? and is it deem'd
 No proof of prudence to restore the mind
 To a sound state by proper means of cure
 Which operate with force, and give the soul
 To think aright, ere yet the passions rule
 With freedom uncontroll'd? do not we find
 That even fauns forsake their dams to feed
 Where pasture calls? do not the tender plants
 Rejoice in fertile soil, where genial heat
 Invigorates the glebe? view nature round,
 And you will find that every thing inclines

To what is best: and should not human minds,
 Offspring of heaven, ray of omnipotence,
 By innate impulse tend where science leads
 To rational delight, which gives a spring
 To intellectual powers? When suits depend
 In civil courts, do not Athenians chuse
 The ablest orators, to plead their cause
 With strength of reason, and adjust the bounds
 Of right and wrong? or when they mean to send
 Their armies forth, or to apply the force
 Of penal laws; does not superior worth
 Direct their suffrages, without regard
 To nearest friends? do even fathers stand
 In competition? or can brothers claim
 A preference, when public voices speak
 Aloud for merit?

MELITUS.

This I own is true,
 But with thy circumstance it little suits:
 Have you aught else to plead?

SOCRATES.

Is it not strange
 That other men, by merit rais'd, should meet
 With high esteem: and yet that I, so fam'd
 For moral discipline, the greatest good
 Which heaven can bestow, should here be call'd
 In question for my life? Is it a proof
 That I deny the gods, and introduce
 A new religion alien from the laws
 Of the Athenian state, when here I stand

Arraign'd

Arraign'd for virtue's cause, which by the gods
And all wise men was ever sacred deem'd?
But let us change the scene.---I clearly see
In this great court, fathers and sons, who long
My dictates fought; let them stand forth and speak
Their inmost soul, whether they found the stream
Corrupt or pure---their silence seems to plead
The merit of my cause---they know I stand
On a sure ground, unshaken as a rock
That bears the force of storms, yet still remains
Firm on the base, and rears it's lofty head
Above the clouds. While therefore purple blood
Runs thro' these veins, I neither can repent
Nor change my conduct. When I carried arms,
Let Potidæa, let Amphipolis
Confess my courage: let Bœotians say
How firm I stood at Delium, on the edge
Of battle where it rag'd; and when a flood
Of arms pour'd on us, measur'd back the field
Only by inches, while our soldiers fled
On all the wings of fear: I did retreat;
But like a lion that disdains repulse,
I fac'd the foe, and held my sword prepar'd
Against assault: if I, who thus in war
Approv'd my courage to restore the rights
Which Athens claim'd, should now desert the post
Which heav'n assign'd me, and thro' fear of death
Cease to prepare the minds of youth
For virtue's laws, and make them fit to rule
In peace or war; then might I freely own

That

That I am justly cited to appear
Before this great tribunal, here conven'd
To sit on life or death. Or should the laws
Remit their force, in case I should renounce
My former doctrines; whom should I obey?
God? or this court?---Know then, Athenians,
That with my latest breath I will exhort
Both young and old, and use all proper means
To purge their souls from vice, and make them soar
Above this sordid earth, on which their thoughts
Seem too intent; unconscious that the soul
Is the whole man, and should be rul'd by laws
Of a superior kind, which suit the port
Of intellectual beings that partake
Of purest essence, flowing from the source
Of immaterial life.---This, judges, is the sum
Of what I have to plead---If aught remains
As yet unanswer'd, let Melitus speak,
Who call'd me forth to judgment.

MELITUS.

O Socrates,
I charge you with a crime, which Athens knows
As well as I---you freely give advice
To private friends, and yet you never mix
In public councils where affairs of state
Demand your presence; which is deem'd a proof
Of disaffection to the common weal
Under whose care you live.

SOCRATES.

SOCRATES.

Since first I found

The sacred source whence virtue springs; nor age
Nor station check'd my zeal to press the force
Of moral laws, on which the civil state
Mainly depends: for must not justice hold
An even scale? and fortitude arise
From an exalted mind, that sees the wheels
By which things move, and can retard the springs
Or actuate their force? say, do I sow
The seeds of virtue, in a place retir'd
From public view? does any private school
Conceal my doctrines, as unfit to view
The open light? do not the common ways
Where all resort, the streets and courts and camps
Ring with my voice? and yet I never chang'd
My moral conduct, but with strength of mind
Unshaken from within, or from without,
Pursued my course, and stem'd the tide of vice.
Where'er I found it flow, without least view
To friendship or to gain: and that I shun
Public assemblies, is not the result
Of disaffection, but of voice divine
That moves my soul, and bids me not engage
In state affairs. Nor is it strange that God
By an interior impulse should convey
His will to man; for does not soul to soul
Communicate it's thoughts, by ways that suit
Our present state? and may not God, who form'd
The soul to thought, and sees the secret springs

By

By which it operates, direct the mind
 In all it's motions ? might he not foresee
 That should I meddle in the public weal,
 That vivid zeal with which he fir'd my soul
 To plead the cause of right, would soon destroy
 This crazy frame, and frustrate the design
 He had in view ? But, say, does he who wears
 The civil robe, or he who trains the mind
 To rules of justice, and the sacred laws
 Of truth and virtue, more deserve the name
 Of a true patriot ? he who fills the chair,
 Or he who moves in an inferior orb,
 But always with design to shew mankind
 That virtue is his care ? O candid friends !
 (For such I deem you) think not that I speak
 In pride, or envy ; that ill suits a mind
 Nurtur'd in humble thoughts, conscious that God
 Alone is truly wise : yet this is plain
 To reason's eye, and evidence of sense,
 That a philosopher, who means to plead
 His country's sacred cause, must live retir'd
 From civil broils, and in his calm retreat
 Plan schemes of discipline that may support
 The moral laws and institutes of right,
 Without whose sanction anarchy prevails.

[Here Anytus and Lycon present themselves
 also as the accusers of Socrates, and draw
 over a great number of voices.

PRESIDENT.

P R E S I D E N T.

Judges, you've heard what Socrates could plead
In his own cause, and know the heavy charge
Melitus brought against him----let the suffrages
Be fairly number'd : their decision soon
Will end the point.

Enter an O F F I C E R of court.

O F F I C E R.

The votes by thirty-three
Are against Socrates.

P R E S I D E N T.

Are the suffrages
Exactly taken ?

O F F I C E R.

Sir, the scrutiny
Is fair and right---I've number'd to a man
With faithful care

P R E S I D E N T.

As then, O Socrates !
Tho' with a melting heart, I speak their sense----
I must pronounce thee guilty----may the gods
Raise in their souls the sentiments I feel
On thy conviction, and inspire their hearts
With principles humane, which should regard
Thy age and virtue, and best suit the genius
Of a people generous in other things
Of far less moment----Let the judges know
What penalty you think befits the crimes
For which you stand condemn'd.

H

S O C R A T E S.

S O C R A T E S.

I cannot charge

My soul with guilt, from which I am as free
 As children yet unborn ; for even now
 No perturbation, no pain-brooding thought
 Molests my conscience, but the better part
 Is all serene, as if a ray from heaven
 Had clear'd my soul, and gave it light to view
 A pleasing scene. I know, Melitus means
 Death for my punishment ; but it is held,
 The laws can mitigate what he presumes
 A proper penalty : yet what than death
 Can better suit my case ? * To pay a fine
 Is to confess a guilt, which more than death
 My soul abhors ; or were I so dispos'd,
 A mind is the whole ransom I could pay
 For my devoted life, perhaps a goal
 Might make atonement----but would servile chains
 Become the dignity of man, ordain'd

* Socrates knew that he could plead for death to be changed into imprisonment, banishment, or a pecuniary fine ; but he openly declared, that by chusing any of these punishments he should confess himself guilty----for it was a custom at Athens, not to give sentence in criminal causes at one single hearing : they determined in the first place, whether the accused was guilty or not ; and if he was guilty, he was allowed for his last refuge to demand a diminution of the punishment, which his accuser had required against him, and upon that demand of the accused, the judges gave their votes a second time, and after that he received his last sentence. Cicero 1. de Oratore.

Diogenes says he offered twenty drachma's (which is about twelve shillings) others mention ten crowns, and Plato makes him promise three hundred crowns, for the payment of which his friends offered to engage ; but Xenophon denies this, and says, that he would neither tax himself, nor suffer his friends to do it for him. Xenophon in Apol.

For

For nobler ends than to preserve a life
On ignominious terms ? or should I chuse
To live in exile, rather than submit
To penal death ; how could my feeble limbs
Move on from place to place, a foreigner
In ev'ry clime ? If here I fail to meet
With due regards ; here, where the muses fix'd
Their sacred seat---if when I shew'd a mind
Stable and firm, beyond the usual strength
Of manly force, and lavish'd from my stores
All I was blest with to reform the minds
Of young and old ; if here I stand condemn'd
For virtue's cause ; what must I not expect
From people less refin'd, whose morals reign
Yet more corrupt and vile ? for, even there,
I would pursue the task which heaven assign'd,
And gave me in strict charge, to purge the soul
From moral turpitude, and make it taste
The heav'nly sweets that virtue's garland wears.
This was the province, which the God who rules
The moral world entrusted to my care,
When he look'd down from heaven, and saw the minds
Of mortals go astray : and should I fall
A martyr to the cause ; I have recourse
To a tribunal, where the Judge who knows
The secrets of my heart, as soon can change
His essence, as depart from the strict rules
Which bind eternal justice---Countrymen !
Hear me again, but hear me with a mind
Benevolent, and congruous to those

Who sit on death---+ Ye have a house, design'd
 For doing honour to the men who serve
 Their country's cause---to that retreat I doom
 This ancient body, shatter'd and decay'd
 Thro' age and labour, there to be maintain'd
 By the republic, for the care I took
 Of Athens' sons, to whom I sacrific'd
 My private interest, which I made to yield
 To public good; of this my poverty
 Is a clear proof---And I to this award
 Have better claim, than he who wins a prize
 In the Olympic games; whether he fly
 On rapid wheels, or gains the glorious meed
 By strength of arm: in him, ye only *seem*
 To be a happy people; but I strove
 To make ye so. This is the penalty
 Which I should chuse, in case I do not fall
 A sacrifice to rage.

JUDGES.

Th' hemlock!--hemlock.

PRESIDENT.

Now, Socrates, you see to what an end
 Your speech has brought you:---you're condemn'd to drink
 The deadly draught---

SOCRATES.

'Tis well; I thank them for it.

That final draught is more to be desir'd

+ This house was called the Prytaneum; it was a magnificent building where the council of the Prytanes assembled, and where those who had rendered any signal service to the state, and those who had won the prize at the Olympic games, were maintained at the expence of the public. Plat. Apol.

Than

Than their rich wines---methinks I feel the taste
Already on my palate : soon 'twill mix
With the warm blood, and Socrates shall fly
From this retarding frame, and soar to heaven.----

Judges, at your command, I'm only going
To suffer death, to which I was condemn'd
From the first moment of my birth : but they
By whom I fall, shall feel a heavier doom
By the decrees of truth ; that sacred law
By which the living God unerring deals
Rewards and punishments---To him with joy
I do resign my being, and submit
To his eternal will---I know to die
Is only to put off this mortal garb
That I may live for ever, where the rage
Of men has no access, nor can disturb
The peaceful mansions of rewarded saints
That never die. Know then, that when the zeal
Of faction cools, ye will deplore the loss
Of this old Socrates, ordain'd by God
Your guardian here, to vindicate the rights
Of virtue's cause, whom I have long pursu'd
Thro' all her tracks, and view'd her virgin train
Array'd in robes of azure and of gold,
The work of heav'n ! Me, shall some future bards
Applaud in choral symphony attun'd
To the Creator's praise, from whom descends
All that is good and just ; but chiefly Thou,
Transcendent being, offspring of the God

Who

Who reigns alone! O Virtue! I would die
Ten thousand deaths to have thy lovely form
For ever in my view!---But give me leave
To ask this boon, ere I am carried hence;
Permit me to embrace and bid farewell
To these my friends, who in their souls abhor
The guilty deed---O judges (for to you
Whose hearts are open to the truth, that name
Of right belongs) to you I would impart
What now my mind suggests, lest anxious thoughts
Concerning what is here decreed, should raise
Commotion in your souls: know then, the dæmon,
That voice prophetic, which I never hear
But when it means to check the fond pursuit
Of something I resolv'd; that voice divine
Neither oppos'd me when I hither came
By order of the court, nor curb'd my tongue
When I pursu'd the merits of my cause
With a firm mind; tho' oft' at other times
It stopt me short, perhaps in the midway
Of my discourse: from whence I fair infer,
That what was done will in event produce
A real good. If in our latest breath
The spirit vanishes in air, and feels
No more sensations; or if death, as some
Would have us think, be similar to sleep
Devoid of visions even seen in dreams,
When the soul rests from thought; death in that view
Is one long scene of ease, as far from end
As is eternity: but if the soul

Be of immortal essence, and partakes
 Of the divinity, as reason's voice
 Aloud proclaims; then shall we find that death
 Is only a migration to the realms
 Where God's enthron'd, still ready to receive
 Departing spirits when they are releas'd
 From earthly cares: there shall I soon retire
 From this bad world; and joyous converse hold
 With ancient sages who by virtue rais'd,
 And deeds of prowess, have with merit won
 The highest honours in the court of fame.

[Exit SOCR.

CHORUS.

Sooner shall cease the circling sun
 His stated annual course to run:
 Sooner the living lamps of light
 Forget to gild the face of night:
 Sooner the magnet cease to draw
 The steel, and err from nature's law:
 Sooner the fire shall turn to snow,
 And seas refuse to ebb and flow:
 Than a firm mind to sense of danger yield,
 And to the fear of death resign the glorious field.
 The man who conscious of his sacred trust,
 Is resolute and obstinately just;
 Spurns the proud tyrant with disdain,
 Defies his frowns with mind serene;
 From reason's noble height looks down on earth,
 And reverences God who gave to virtue birth:

Not

Not the drear waste of frozen zone
Where cheerless winter plants her throne ;
Not the foul damp of gloomy cells,
Where the Cimmerian nation dwells ;
Not the rough whirlwind that deforms
The seas and earth and heaven with storms ;
The firmness of his soul can move ;
Not the red arm of angry Jove
That flings the forky thunder from the sky
And gives it rage to roar, and force of wing to fly.
Should the bright orbs of heaven discordant jar,
And all the elements engage in war ;
Should nature's frame around him fall
And form one rude chaotic ball ;
He would intrepid see the ruins hurl'd,
And stand, unknown to fear, amidst a sinking world.

A C T IV. S C E N E, the Prison.

Enter SOCRATES, with the GOALER.

GOALER.

MY masters, sir, their strict commands have given,
 With heavy chains to load thy aged limbs,
 Until that fatal hapless day arrives
 In which thy rigid sentence has thee doom'd
 To drink the poison'd cup---I must obey---
 Tho' to my soul repugnant is the deed---

SOCRATES.

Sir, do your duty---I can bear the chains
 With ease of mind, and hope to-morrow's sun
 Will set me free---That which is Socrates
 Thou can't not bind.

[Exit GOALER.]

SOCRATES solus.

Ye darksome forests! whose embow'ring trees
 No light pervades, whose pathless underwoods
 Assume the horrors of the grave: ye rocks!
 On whose rough base the baleful cypress grows,
 And funeral yew; where solitary birds
 Attune their plaintive songs: ye streams, which flow,
 Or sullen move along the reedy pool,
 Or glide near mossy trunks of trees, and wind
 In drear meanders thro' the barren plains
 Of marshy grounds---ye dismal low-sunk vales,
 Beneath whose dark collected shade reclin'd

I

Deep

Deep horrors dwell, exhibit, pour forth all
Your sad despair-creating influence,
Your phantoms, ghastly groupe of fears begot
By black distemper'd fumes on guilty minds
Engend'ring woe, whose dusky, gloomy robe
By crimes put on, distracted fancy wears;
Who sees, or thinks she sees, on shapes like yours
Her own detested drap'ry dipt in night;
To souls like these, in sensual styes immers'd,
Redouble all your horrors—to me, they
Nought administer but peace and joy;
Socrates should find in earth's deep center
Expanded skies, and stars, and sun-shine round;
There, virtue brighter than them all, will beam
On virtue, and his soul illumine through
Pleasing eternity, his lamp unquench'd.
O Thou, of time, of space, of worlds the cause,
Immense, eternal, infinite! with Thee
The world's duration is but as one day,
And all is gone! a thousand, thousand suns
May have preceded that we now behold;
And thousands may succeed with fresh supplies
Of recent light: but as those instruments
Which measure time are mov'd by stated laws,
And social compact of assisting parts;
So suns to suns for ever tend, and stars
To stars incline in kindred orbs, that dance
In sweet vicinity their destin'd rounds,
Obedient to thy dread command: the gems
That nightly glitter in the vault of heaven,

All

All vanish at thy will, as the grass fades
Aduft and dry beneath the scorching heat
Of summer sun : the twinkling polar-stars
Sparkle with brilliant lustre, but when near
Thy brighter beams intensely hot, are burn'd
And wither'd up, as fades the blushing rose
Before the noon-tide ray, which shot direct
Contracts it's filken leaves. When nature young
Contended with the rude chaotic mass,
Ere yet the world was settled into form ;
Ere matter did, by Thee impress'd, receive
It's binding laws ; ere yet the solar beam
Shot thro' the regions of primeval night
Almost impenetrable ; Thou wast then
As far, great Deity supreme ! remov'd
From any origin as now : and when
A second chaos shall devour this world,
And of the universal frame nothing but space
And void remains ; when the new heavens shall shine
With stars that differ from the lamps of light
We now behold, and all have run the round
Of their appointed periods : Thou, great God,
Shalt ever be the same, unknown to waste
Of self-existence ! the quick flight of thought,
Compar'd to whose swift wing, time, sound, and light,
Itself is slow, lost in the endless search,
Can never reach thy height ; for thought soon fails
In the pursuit of that which knows no bounds.
Maker of all things ! Thou art the bright sun
Which measures the immensity of time

S O C R A T E S,

With even pace : Thou dost exist with strength
 Never to be impair'd : Thine is the light
 Of one perpetual, one meridian-day
 Which ne'er can change ; but, as like lesser suns
 Which shew an orient dawn, Thou ne'er didst rise,
 So wilt Thou never set. Father of light !
 Give me to feel the influence of thy ray
 Thro' all eternity ! Be thine, great God !
 To purify my soul from mortal stain
 Of vice destructive, and prepare my mind
 For the fruition of eternal good.

Enter PHÆDO, CEBES, and other friends.

S O C R A T E S.

Phædo, thou'rt welcome---welcome all my friends !
 But why that melancholy gloom ? has aught
 Unhing'd our country's peace ? or do ye grieve
 For my departure to a place where joys
 Shall ever reign ; and where, so wills the God,
 We soon shall meet again ? and thence look down
 From skies serene, on this tumultuous world,
 That rolls like wind-swoln seas, which cannot rest.

P H Æ D O.

O Socrates ! thou worthiest of the Greeks,
 Howe'er renown'd in the historic page
 For wisdom's lore ! thy friends have cause to mourn
 For thy departure from a world which wants
 Thy aid the more, the more it is disturb'd
 By vice and faction. Off' hast thou alone

With

With steady mind, firm and intrepid stood
Against a multitude, when tyrants rul'd
With arbitrary sway, tore up the bounds
Of right and wrong, and with despotic heel
On virtue trampled.

SOCRATES.

He who justice deals,
With vengeance will repay the deeds of violence
Done here on earth. O! let me moralize,
Whilst yet this vocal organ is in tune
To speak the serious dictates of my soul.
Man is a compound being, partly made
Of fine material mould; and partly form'd
Of intellectual powers, which animate
And move the frame, as force of will directs,
Or reason rules; two faculties, which flow
From the same soul; one in the quest of good,
And one of choice: and yet the will, misled
By sense and appetite which close adhere
To the material system, oft' commands
What reason oft' forbids: hence are two ways
Laid open to your choice; here reason leads
Where virtue sits sublime, ready to point
To true beatitude; there vagrant will
Draws you a mazy round in quest of joys
Which fade away, and vanish in the act
Of first fruition: if then death dissolves
The compound system, if the thinking part
Shall dissipate in air, when the embrace
Of body's o'er; vice would forget it's form,

And

And vanish with the soul, absorb'd and lost
 In the wide womb of nothing : but, as soul,
 That principle divine ; of earth-made man
 The immaterial spirit, does partake
 Of pure immortal essence, and subsists
 To all eternity ; it must depend
 On moral virtue, as the only ground
 Of future happiness : for, when the soul
 Has from it's prison 'scaped, nothing remains
 But vice or virtue, the determin'd seeds
 Of happiness or misery, just doom
 Denounc'd by God's infallible decree
 To voluntary agents, fitly form'd
 To keep or violate their Maker's laws
 As passions rule, or reason holds the reins !

C E B E S.

If this be true, they who pursue a life
 Of virtue here, must, when they die, ascend
 Empyrean heaven, there to enjoy a state
 Unknown to change : but some have warmly argued,
 That when the body dies, the soul like air
 Flies off unseen and lost, insensible
 Of pain or pleasure, which can only cleave
 To what is animate.

S O C R A T E S.

Let us, my friend,
 Deliberate on nature's laws, and see
 What things can suffer change, and what endure
 The length of ages and the force of fate.
 Know then that compounds, from whatever kind

They

They draw their being, are by nature fit
 For dissolution, ever in a flux,
 And soon surrender their specific forms
 To be no more ; but what is simple found
 Which we call essence, never suffers change
 By time and place, but still remains the same
 Compleat and self-subsisting thing, unknown
 To alteration : things of the first kind
 Are open to the view, and lie expos'd
 To every sense ; but essence can be seen
 Only by reason's eye, when the soul soars
 Beyond the verge of sense, to take a view
 Of the ideal world, and penetrate
 The things that never vanish, but from sight
 Of mortal eye : hence then we may suppose
 Two sorts of beings ; visible the one,
 And one invisible ; this still the same,
 Whilst that is still in change.

CEBES.

So far, my friend,

You reason right.

SOCRATES.

Is there aught else in man,
 Save soul and body ? do not these compose
 The total system ? can the soul be seen
 By keenest eye ? tho' body be discern'd
 In it's whole bulk ? say, is not this the state
 Of human frame ? is not the body then
 Conform to things that suffer change, and feel
 A final dissolution, while the soul,

Pure,

Pure, immaterial, and from mixture free,
 Eludes the stroke, and flies the falling frame
 That mingles with the mould, to which it ow'd
 It's compound being ?

C E B E S.

Now I take you right,
 And yield a free assent : the one resigns
 What plastic nature gave it, and dissolves
 Into it's principles ; the other holds
 It's self-subsisting form, devoid of parts
 That suffer change.

S O C R A T E S.

Then were the soul enslav'd
 To the corporeal senses, when employ'd
 In elevated thoughts ; would it not turn
 From the pure view of truth, and mix with things
 Unstable known, as veering as the wind
 That knows no settled point ? but when the soul
 Looks inward on itself, and views the train
 Of fair ideas, which the intellect
 Digests in method right, and makes them fit
 For reason's use, it turns to what is pure
 And sempiternal found, unknown to change
 Of form or order, and to which it bears
 A near relation : there the thinking soul
 Allured by kindred ties, as thought and truth
 Are daughters of the Deity, oft' feasts
 On intellectual sweets from the gross sense
 Of body free, and therefore far remov'd
 From error's darkling shade, which like a cloud

O'ercasts

O'ercasts the beam of reason, and obstructs
 The splendid flow of light which ever streams
 From heavenly wisdom; don't you therefore find
 The active soul, when from communion free
 With the corporeal senses, firm adheres
 To what is simply best?

CEBES.

It must be so;

In such a situation it conforms
 To what is simple, right, unchangeable,
 And self-subsisting; but the body bears
 Similitude to what is still in flux,
 As objects vary, and the senses lead
 To what right reason never would assent.

SOCRATES.

But as the system of the human frame
 Is so contriv'd, that soul and body hold
 A mutual commerce while they live on earth
 In social union; does not nature teach
 That the corporeal part, which owes it's mass
 To inert matter, should submit to laws,
 And move as reason guides? and, that the soul,
 Of origin divine, should still exert
 It's just dominion?

CEBES.

Doubtless, it should claim
 Superior rule; and therefore they who judge
 With true and philosophic minds, should fly
 From the gross body, and pursue the train
 Of pure ideas opening to the view

K

Of

Of reason's eye, when left serenely bright,
To take a prospect of the pleasing scene.

S O C R A T E S.

Cebes, you argue right---the soul disturb'd
By sense and passion, which inherent cleave
To the corporeal frame, does often drop
A lucid thought, and visionary catch
Shade unsubstantial. Let us now review
The steps we have pursued, and we shall see
To what fixt point our former reas'ning clue
Conducts our search---The soul, consider'd right
In sense abstracted, shews itself divine,
Intelligent, self-moving, free from parts
And dissolution, immaterial, free,
And void of passions, simple, self-secure
From what might check the intellectual powers
From close pursuit of truth : the other part
Of the compounded system, is a mass
Of breathing matter, multiform, depriv'd
Of all intelligence, by nature fram'd
For dissolution, ever in a flux,
Uncertain as the breeze that fans the air,
Subject to weakness and disease, th' effect
Of jarring atoms : here, now there inclin'd,
As passions force, or varied objects move.
Do not these complicated things consist
With the eternal laws, by which the God
Who made the soul and body, wisely rules
As well the moral as material world ?

C E B E S.

CEBES.

It must be so : for the true moral world
 Is of quite different sort from what we call
 The natural ; to one, the thinking soul
 Is near allied, and therefore should be rul'd
 By moral laws, adapted and apply'd
 To beings, charg'd with intellect, and will
 To judge and chuse : but body is a part
 Of the material world, and must obey
 The laws of dissolution, when the soul
 Springs forth to moral joy---Say, my good friend,
 Do I pursue the line of your discourse ?

SOCRATES.

You take me right---when then a man resigns
 His living breath, nothing is visible
 But the corporeal part, to which the soul
 Gave sense and motion ; and when vital springs
 No longer operate, nothing can remain
 But lifeless matter, obvious to the sense
 Of sight and touch, which soon, if not embalm'd,
 Must melt away, and mingle with the mould
 Which gave it being : but the soul, secure
 From force of fate, soars to a place unseen
 By mortal eye, and when it has shook off
 The sluggish load, with which it commerce held,
 Small and infrequent as the cogent laws
 Of vital union claim, but firmly stood
 Collected in itself ; as far remov'd
 As possible from sense, intensely bent
 On speculations high, which fill the mind

With sentiments sublime---the happy fruit
 Of true philosophy---does not a soul
 For heaven thus calculated, claim a right
 To what it is most like, the living God,
 Immortal, and supreme, from whom it drew
 It's wond'rous essence? thither when the soul
 Releas'd from sense and appetites, which cleave
 To the material system, wings it's way
 By native impulse rais'd, it lives like gods
 In calm repose, where truth in splendor gay
 Shines forth with beams divine, and fills the soul
 With intellectual joy; no darkling shade
 To interrupt the view, but things are seen
 Conspicuous as the light: for there the God
 Whose emanations fill the universe,
 Is all in all, who ever was, and is,
 And shall for ever be the same, incapable
 Of alteration.

C E B E S.

Doubtless what is pure
 Should mix with pure, and both confed'rate join,
 Like light and heat, which issue from the same
 Unvaried source.

S O C R A T E S.

But when a soul unpurg'd
 Of earthly vice, resigns the wretched frame,
 To which it close adher'd with fond embrace
 As thither lur'd by magic spell, to feast
 On sensual joys, to which it was so prone
 That nought seem'd good, or true, but what arose

From

From some corporeal sense; something which pleas'd
 Or sight, or taste, or touch, organs prepar'd
 By the wise Maker, only to supply
 The wants of nature, while the complex state
 It's union holds; nor could be brought to think
 That aught invisible to human eye
 Has real being, tho' the intellect
 When undisturb'd by sense, can clearly view
 The moral world, and see the form of things
 In simple essence: say, can such a soul
 Be fraught with innocence, and taste the sweets
 Of intellectual joy, so long inur'd
 To sensual pleasure?

C E B E S.

Questionless, a soul
 Which with the body a fond commerce holds,
 Imbibes corporeal stain, and lies immers'd
 In the foul dregs of matter, a vile slave
 To brutish appetites, to which it yields
 The scepter of it's power, and clings to sense,
 As if congenite with material mould;
 So deep the taint has sunk into the soul!

P H A E D O.

As human souls thus differ in the choice
 Of vice or virtue, yet pursue their ends
 By steps unequal; does no middle state
 Lie betwixt happiness, and pains, that spring
 From vice as from their seeds? do all who tread
 The different ways that lead where happiness
 Or misery is found, partake alike

Of

Of pain or pleasure? for, tho' virtue wear
 Appearance different from that of vice,
 Yet each has features more or less conform
 To the true lines of good and evil, drawn
 By reason's pencil, dipt in colours strong
 That shew a heaven or depaint a hell.

S O C R A T E S.

Thither I meant, my friends, to lead the thread
 Of my discourse, while yet my fault'ring tongue
 Performs it's office, destin'd by the God
 Who fram'd the organ, to declare his works
 And speak his praise. Learn then, to know the laws
 Of will divine. Pure moral rectitude
 Is of the essence of the Deity,
 And cannot vary from the laws that rule
 Eternal justice, which in a solemn place
 Of final doom, where human souls convene,
 Led by their dæmons, shall the fates of men
 Aweful pronounce, and to each soul assign
 A proper region suited to the kind
 Of it's past life, since it descended first
 From pre-existent state to animate
 An earthly substance, by the God inspir'd
 With will and reason; reason to direct,
 And will to chuse; with sense and appetites,
 Which, as employ'd, may either prove the guards
 Or bane of virtue. They who lead a life,
 Nor always prone to vice, nor full intent
 On virtue's charms, must in a certain place
 Suffer due pains, proportion'd to their crimes,

In

In measure just, 'till being cleans'd of guilt
Which soil'd their souls, they meet with a reward
That's justly adequate to moral good
Performed here, from future dread of torture
Ever free: whilst they who've amass'd a load
Of crimes enormous, and atrocious deeds
Of direful nature, which even mercy's hand
Cannot obliterate, are downward hurl'd
To lowest Tartarus, and there consign'd
To ever-during chains---the fit reward
Of foul demeanour. They indeed who led
By a misguided will, the menial slave
To sense and passion, have committed sins
Of a deep dye, but such as penitence
May purge away; shall for a stated time
Suffer due penance, 'till by humble suit,
Join'd to the workings of a contrite soul,
They merit pardon, from the living God
Freely obtain'd;---so close does mercy cleave
To justice infinite---the attributes
Of Him who rules supreme---But, O my friends!
Know for your comfort, here while ye remain,
And in this painful pilgrimage have led
A life of innocence, by reason train'd
To purity of will, and free from stain
Of moral turpitude, which warps the mind
To taste for sensual joys; such guiltless souls,
From the dead weight of earthly chains releas'd
As from a prison, are receiv'd on high
In blissful regions, where incessant streams

Empyréal

Empyréal light from his celestial throne
 Who reigns above, and pours forth all the rays
 Of goodness beyond thought, much less can words
 Express ideas, too enlarg'd to lie
 Within the compass of created souls.

[Exeunt.

SOCRATES retires.

CHORUS.

The MORAL OECONOMY.

As in the system of the world we find
 Parts of a lower and a higher kind;
 And each as in due order plac'd,
 Is with peculiar beauty grac'd:
 So does the soul superior claim
 A right to rule the human frame,
 Whilst lower powers in obsequious train
 Exert their menial aid, and reason's laws maintain:

For passions, in a truly moral state
 On will, by reason guided, ever wait;
 Serve lawless motions to controul,
 And are the guardians of the soul,
 Which by their aid, with bold essay
 To heights of virtue speeds her way;
 From sordid earth uprais'd with effort flies,
 And claims a moral kindred to her native skies.

How delicately made is nature's chain,
 Where all things mutual lend, and mutual gain;
 The will a middle state maintains;
 Here reason rules, there passion reigns

To

To execute the will's commands,
While at the helm sage reason stands
To see that all things thither fairly tend,
Where God directs the way, and nature points the end.

Will then and reason are in kind the same,
And stand distinguish'd only in the name ;
For choice, where reason fails, is blind,
But, with it, of the moral kind ;
For then both will and reason draw
Eternal truths from nature's law ;
While moving passions are the active springs
Which give the soul to rise on reason's soaring wings.

A C T V. S C E N E I.

S O C R A T E S solus.

* O MAY a friendly gale at heav'n's command
 Soon hither waft the destin'd ship that bears
 The signal for my death ! how slowly seem
 The hours to glide, which carry on their wings
 Our fondest hopes ! my mind is full prepar'd
 For speedy death.

Enter C R I T O and other friends.

S O C R A T E S.

Welcome, my friends ! sit down
 As seems ye best---the hurricane has ceas'd,
 And all is calm---this is the happy day
 Which gives me notice of my change ; let joy
 Serene appear in ev'ry smiling face,
 And bid it welcome : what the president

* Socrates happened to be condemned the very day the priest of Apollo crowned the poop of the sacred ship which sailed with an offering into the island of Delos.

The reader must observe, that this ship went annually in commemoration of the mighty deliverance of Theseus in Crete, and in consequence of his vow. It was a rule of their religion, never to be broken through, that from the time of the departure of this ship from the port of Athens to the time of it's coming back, no malefactors were ever put to death : this sometimes, by means of contrary winds, occasioned the intervention of a considerable space, as happened in the case of Socrates, who was in prison thirty days before his death, during which time his disciples attended him with uncommon assiduity.

Plato in Phæd.--Plut. de invidia et odio.

Whilom

Whilom denounc'd, shot like a ray of light
 Darted from heaven, and gave my soul to feel
 Joys which I can't express---What ! does pale grief
 Sit furrow'd on your brows, as if chill fear
 Thrill'd thro' the veins ? does this, my friends, bescem
 A festal day ? a day, which fair shall shine
 In future fame ? are ye aghast to find
 Your friend shall soon be happy, and resume
 His pristine state ? for shame, my brethren !
 Let nobler thoughts inspire your heav'n-born souls,
 And give them sentiments which suit the port
 Of immaterial beings made to live
 A short time here---Father of gods and men !
 Be thine the pious care to raise my soul
 Above the fear of death, which can destroy
 That part alone, which plastic nature form'd
 Under the conduct of thy guiding hand.

CRITO.

O Socrates ! can we unmov'd behold
 That venerable body gall'd with chains
 Which none but knaves should bind ? thy hoary head
 Doom'd to a prison, where the genial ray
 Abhors to enter ? and thy sons expos'd
 To the bare world ? or destin'd to depend
 On the kind friendly hand, which takes delight
 In doing good ? have we not reason then
 To mourn the loss of thee who stood unmov'd
 In virtue's cause ?---but means for thy escape
 May yet be found.---

L 2

SOCRATES.

S O C R A T E S.

Unless I violate

The civil laws, and fly from what they deem

An act of justice, I must here resign

This aged body to the punishment

My judges doom'd ; but the ethereal part

Of essence pure, that principle divine

Which constitutes the man, can never feel

The fatal blow : for, when this body blends

With parent earth, the soul sublime shall soar

Thro' fields of ether bright, to meet the God

Who gave it being, and shall make it shine

Thro' all eternity in realms of light.

Thanks to the judges ! tho' without design,

They have consign'd me to a life of joy ;

Which flows unfailing from a source divine,

Sole fountain pure of pleasure and delight !

C R I T O.

Had'st thou, O Socrates, in humble suit

Address'd the judges, and chose aught, beside

The Prytanæum, for thy punishment ;

They never would have sentenc'd thee to death :

But to demand reward, (tho' it became

The merit of thy cause) stunn'd like a clap

Of unexpected thunder, when the sky

Is free from clouds.

S O C R A T E S.

Had I, in humble guise,

With abject mind, and supplication mean,

Implor'd their mercy ; thus perhaps I might

Have

Have fav'd a life, but at the dear expence
 Of all that honour, which a man long train'd
 In philosophic lore, might justly claim
 From a free people. On this principle
 Firm I rely, that nothing beside guilt
 Can be an evil, and do therefore chuse
 Rather to be depriv'd of some few years
 I might have liv'd, than in an instant lose,
 By grov'ling means, the glory I had gain'd
 In my past life: and as the present age
 Seems not to know my worth, I hence appeal
 To late posterity, assur'd to meet
 With more regard in all succeeding times,
 When prejudice and envy die away.

CRITO.

Good night, my friend---some business calls me forth
 Ere yet I go to rest; to-morrow's dawn
 Shall bring me hither, when I hope to find
 Thy ear dispos'd to listen to advice.

[Exit.

SOCRATES.

Now, I am quite at ease---Crito no more
 Will think of my escape---how some men judge
 Of what is right or wrong! To leave this place
 Without an order from the civil powers,
 Is to rebel against the laws that rule
 This honour'd state, which could not long subsist,
 Did ev'ry member claim a right to void
 It's firm decrees---But now the car of night
 Rolls in deep shade, and warns me to address
 My wonted vespers to the God who rules

The

The sweet vicissitude of night and day---
 Hail, universal Lord ! at whose command
 The sun withdraws his ray, and darkling dips
 To néther world ! anon, the starry train
 Of heav'n succeeds, nor varies from the course
 By thee ordain'd : thine is the dewy shade
 Which veils the night, and thine the pearly drops
 That dress the morn ! all nature is at once
 Thy care and offspring ! be it thine to guard
 The firmness of my soul, and keep it free
 From foul transgression and corporeal stain !

CHORUS.

Thy praise, O Socrates, the moral bards,
 High in fame for sacred song,
 To future ages shall transmit,
 As time's current rolls along.
 Future ages free from envy
 Shall thy leading steps pursue ;
 Shall attend to reason's lore,
 And hold thy virtue in distinguish'd view.

To thee, Minerva's shrine shall honour pay ;
 To thee, Apollo tune his lyre :
 From thee shall future sages feel
 The sacred warmth of heav'nly fire.
 By thee the patriot train'd to laws
 Which ought to rule a civil state,
 Shall find his schemes successful prove,
 And by his virtues make his country great.

Fir'd

Fir'd by thy courage, shall the warrior pour
 His banner'd legions o'er the plain;
 Fixt as the laws of fate to fall
 With honour, or a conquest gain:
 Virtue when harass'd with distress
 From thee shall consolation find;
 Look with disdain on things below,
 And give the soul a taste for pleasures more refin'd.

S C E N E II.

Ethereal SPIRITS descend and sing while SOCRATES sleeps.

Ease, delight of human kind!
 Soft enchantress of the mind!
 Sweet the warbling wood-lark's song,
 When he chaunts the trees among!
 But without thee his sweetest strain
 Instead of pleasure gives a pain.
 Sweet is the dewy-spangled mead,
 The level lawn or winding glade!
 Sweet is the cadence of the limpid rill
 When gently trickling down the smooth reclining hill!

But nor rill nor lawn can please
 When the mind is not at ease.
 Ease, thou happy gift of heaven,
 By the gods to mortals given!
 Thou, to fair virtue near ally'd,
 Art ever by her sacred side!

Whether

Whether she chuse the rugged way,
 Or thro' the moss-grown valley stray;
 You, sooth'd with raptur'd fancy, walk along,
 And lend attentive ear to her celestial song.

Ease the lyric bard inspires,
 Warms his breast with heavenly fires;
 Bids him swell a fuller key,
 Or a softer sound convey.
 'Tis ease alone gives peaceful rest
 To the pure virtue-breathing breast;
 'Tis ease that calms the ruffled soul,
 'Tis ease can passion's force controul:
 Virtue and ease for ever social join;
 Both of congenial form, and both of birth divine!

See the softly-sleeping sage,
 Silver'd o'er with hoary age!
 See his visage calm and clear,
 Such as smiling infants wear,
 When at some pleasing glittering toy,
 Their little hearts exult with joy.
 Happiest of mortals! soon shall we
 Thy unembodied spirit see;
 When in high heaven it tunes the golden lyre,
 And joins in symphony with the celestial choir.

[On CRITO'S coming in, SOCRATES awakes.

SOCRATES.

Thy visitation, Crito, seems to bear
 Some hasty message, say, how wears the time?
 Is it yet day?

CRITO.

CRITO.

The first fresh dawn of light
 Opens the morn, and bids Aurora rise
 To wake the sun. Just as I enter'd here
 Methought I heard a softly, warbling voice,
 That tun'd melodious numbers ; near at first
 It seem'd, then by slow sinking dy'd away
 In distant sounds.

SOCRATES.

O Crito ! such a night
 I never spent 'till now : in easy flow
 The circling blood held on a gentle course
 Thro' all my veins : my head serene and clear
 As the still air, when scarce a breeze is found
 To wave it's wings : the spirits which exhale
 From the pure purple flood, in wanton play
 Danc'd round my heart ; and the respiring lungs
 Breath'd with uncommon ease : methought I heard
 Voices that tun'd harmonious airs, more soft
 Than Orpheus' song, which made the savage race
 Forget their rage. Praise to the God supreme
 Who reigns above, still present to our wants
 Whether we wake or sleep ! for, what you've heard
 Was doubtless sent by him, to cheer my soul
 With minstrelsy divine. But, Crito, say,
 What so soon brought thee to the dismal goal
 Of thy old friend ? is the ship yet arriv'd
 Which sail'd to Delos, and at whose return
 I leave this world to hasten to the host
 Of heav'n's inhabitants, and taste the sweets

M

Of

Of love and joy, which the soul cannot feel
While here embodied?

CRITO.

There is sure advice
From Sunium brought, that with to-morrow's sun
The fatal vessel comes---therefore in haste
I hither sped to tell thee, that the doors
Are open to thy flight, the goaler gain'd,
And all things ready for a sure escape
From ruthless prison, and the dread of death.
Haste, and let us leave ungrateful Athens,
Ere the dim morning brighten into day.

SOCRATES.

Is there a place beyond the bounds which hold
This Attica, where death has no access
To mortal man? had I not better here
Resign my life? here, where the state decreed
That I should end my days? does it consist
With honour's laws, that like a miscreant
Touch'd with the sense of guilt, I thus should fly
Thro' fear of death? such practice ill becomes
The principles I taught.

CRITO.

Perhaps you think
That your escape would hurt your friends who hold
Your doom unjust; perchance expose their lives
To civil rage---but, what can be more dear
To an ingenuous mind, than to preserve
The life of Socrates, on which depends
The good of thousands? even strangers come

From

From distant parts to purchase thy release
On lavish terms, with promise to supply
Thy future wants, and make thee finish life
In peaceful ease: or, should'st thou think that scheme
Too insecure; I have in Thessaly
A sweet retreat, where you may freely live
Remote from danger, and in safe repose
Plant in your children's minds the living seeds
Of sacred truth: there may Xantippe close
Thy beamless eyes, when nature stops the springs
Of borrow'd motion, and thy soul takes flight
On upward pinions to the throne of heaven.

SOCRATES.

Had I, thro' curiosity, been led
To see this seat of science, unattach'd
To the Athenian laws, and here arraign'd
For crimes I know not, I should think my life
Might be preserv'd by ministerial means
Of any kind, which would not lay the rules
Of moral virtue waste: but, as I here
Was usher'd into life, and deeply drank
Of the soul-cheering stream which limpid flows
From scientific spring; as here I spent
My riper years, obedient to the laws
Of the Athenian state, which spread it's wings
To guard my civil rights; as more than once
With due solemnity I pledg'd my faith, to hold
The laws of justice sacred, and renounce
All private views: how can I now unhinge
Such strong engagements, made by free consent,
And voluntary choice?

CRITO.

CRITO.

O Socrates !

Thy country has condemn'd thee to a death
 That wears the cloud of guilt, which to thy soul
 Was ever odious known---Can Justice here
 Plead in her favour ? can she hold the scales
 Of right and wrong with an unequal hand,
 And weigh the fates of men, as will inclines
 To save or to destroy ? Can she absolve
 The hand profane for shedding guiltless blood,
 Which cries aloud for vengeance from the gods
 On a curs'd nation ?

SOCRATES.

Crito, too much zeal

In friendship's cause, has made you pass the bounds
 Of virtue's law, which bid you not return
 Evil for evil ; nor requite offence
 By the like usage ; nor repair a wrong
 By foul misdeeds. Should he who gave thy frame
 It's vital seeds, or she who with fond care
 Nurtur'd thy helpless youth, and train'd thy tongue
 To lisping prattle, should they discourteous prove
 And treat thee hardly, would'st thou therefore drop
 Filial obeysance, and forget the son
 To be reveng'd on those who gave thee birth ?
 And know'st thou not, thy country claims a right
 To more regard than they from whom you drew
 The crimson blood which circles in your veins ?
 You know, my Crito, I have ever taught,
 That acts of justice in a civil state

Are

Are it's defence and bulwark, the firm base
 On which it stands : say then, I am to die
 In virtue's cause, and fall a sacrifice
 To warmth of rage ; do they who take my life,
 Suffer, or I ? The spotless soul secure
 From shock of death, smiles at the pointed dart,
 And bids it strike---Let then Melitus fear,
 And they who judg'd me---there grim horror claims
 A right to rage : O may they find a way
 To make their peace with God : I here resign
 My sentenc'd life a victim to his will.

CRITO.

I wish my care had met with more regard.

[Exit CRITO. And SOCRATES retires.

CHORUS.

Death, when view'd by guilty eyes,
 Must in dreadful form appear ;
 But to the good and virtuous mind
 Death can nought but pleasure wear :

There the soul in separate life
 When divorc'd from wedded clay,
 Has nothing to employ it's thoughts,
 But dreary mansions void of day :

Here the soul from earth escap'd
 Ranges thro' joyous realms of light ;
 With wonder views the rolling orbs,
 All heaven unfolding to it's sight :

There

There shalt thou quickly wear the crown,
 Where virtue's gems for ever glow,
 Excursive soar, and thence look down
 With pity on the world below.

S C E N E III.

SOCRATES solus.

Now all within is calm---when this bright sun,
 Shall dip in western wave it's glowing wheels,
 From earth shall Socrates with joy ascend
 Into the regions of eternal light
 Where God presides, the origin and end
 Of heav'n-born souls! there I shall joyous meet
 With * Palamedes, upright man, betray'd

By

* Palamedes the son of Nauplius king of Eubœa, when the Grecian kings were to go to the war of Troy. Ulysses (son of Laertes) to save himself at home, feigned himself mad. Palamedes found out the counterfeit, by laying his son in the furrow, as he was ploughing, and sowing salt---he stopt the plough, and saved the boy, whereupon his counterfeiting was discovered, and he was taken to the war against his will, and being sent into Thrace to forage for corn, he returned, and said he could find none---Palamedes went himself, and returned with large quantities from thence. Ulysses, to revenge these things, counterfeited a letter in Priamus's name, wherein he thanked Palamedes for his intended treason, and mentioned that he had sent him gold for a reward: now Ulysses had secretly conveyed gold into his tent: these letters were found and read in the camp. Palamedes was called; Ulysses seemed to defend him, and said no trust was to be given to the letters of enemies; but, said he, let some men be sent into Palamedes's tent, and then if there be found any sum of gold, that he was surely guilty---They sent and found the gold, and Palamedes was condemned and stoned---His death was afterwards revenged by Nauplius. In the time of the Trojan war he invented four Greek letters σ , ξ , χ , ϕ , adding them to the sixteen which had been before invented by Cadmus. He was skilful in astrology, and the first who found out the cause of eclipses, and brought the year to the course of the sun, and the month

By old Laertes' son : there † Æacus,
 And ‡ Rhadamanthus and Triptolemus,
 Renown'd of old, heroes and demigods,
 Sanctities of heav'n, that kept their souls
 Unstain'd by vice, and all who held in view
 The public good, his praise shall celebrate
 In chaunt symphonious, whose erective hand
 Made heav'n and earth, and the stupendous whole
 In all it's vast variety of change
 In stated order rules : there * Linus, born
 Of fair Terpsichore, and who first taught
 Threïcian Orpheus to high-string his lyre
 To artful melody ; there he who sung
 The race of gods, and taught the rural plains
 To yield their fruits ; there blind Mæonides,
 So fam'd for epic song, and all the bards

Who

month to the course of the moon---He invented several methods of ordering an army, and the giving the watch word, which, together with those letters, they said, he learned by the conduct and flying of cranes---whence by the poets they are called Palamedis aves---the birds of Palamedes. Mart.

† Æacus was the son of Jupiter by Ægina ; he and Rhadamanthus were only inferior judges, the first of whom examined the Europeans, the latter the Asiatics, and bore only plain rods as a mark of their office ; but all difficult cases were referred to Minos, who sat over them with a scepter of gold---Their court was held in a large meadow called the field of truth. Plato and Tully add Triptolemus to these as a fourth judge---he was son of Celeus of Athens ; Ceres lent him her chariot, and sent him through the world to instruct mankind in the benefits of tillage.

‡ Rhadamanthus was son of Jupiter and Europa, a great legislator, and brother to Minos---who having killed his brother, fled to Æchalia in Bœotia, where he married Alcmena, the widow of Amphytrion : his province in the infernal regions was to judge such as died impenitent.

* Linus was son of Apollo, whom he had by the nymph Terpsichore ; he was born at Thebes, and eminent for learning---he wrote on the origin of the world, the courses of the sun and moon, and the production of animals---but of these not the least fragments remain.

Who sung of virtue, in full concert join'd
 Shall strike the silver cymbals tun'd to notes
 Of harmony divine, and heav'n's bright court
 Shall ring with joy : such is the symphony
 Of souls above---But ! Crito comes
 Who *would* act right, but oft mistakes the means.

Enter CRITO, and several friends.

CRITO.

O Socrates ! thy faithful friends in crowds
 Do hither flock, and press to know thy will
 Concerning thy affairs, that they may learn
 What best befits thy family, and suits
 Thy tender offspring.

SOCRATES.

I have nothing new
 To leave in charge---pursue the moral schemes
 I always taught ; if ye neglect yourselves
 You will not think of me, nor of the friends
 I leave behind me ; still let your faithful
 Memories be stor'd with all those lectures,
 All those moral rules, which for your guidance
 Chiefly I have plan'd ; with unabated vigour,
 Truth's sacred steps pursue, where'er she leads
 Her safe-directing way ; altho' th' event
 May unsuccessful prove ; let justice rule
 In all your actions : be the republic
 Your guardian care ; let love and friendship's bonds
 Unite you all, and let no wild misrule

Bear down virtue, for without virtue's aid,
 No state can long subsist: Xantippe's friends,
 With her own industry and care, will feed
 The wants of nature; very small supplies
 Are found sufficient; what is more, must tend
 To slothful luxury. Give it in charge
 To my dear children, to pursue the steps
 Their father trod; and train their youthful minds
 To sentiments of truth, as ye would sow
 Seed in a field, ere multitude of weeds
 Renders it waste: and should they fall like me
 In virtue's cause, we soon shall meet above,
 Where God's unerring justice holds the scales,
 By which the merit of the cause is weigh'd---
 This counsel I bequeath---be it your care
 To see the purport of my will obey'd.

CRITO.

But say, my friend, how would you be interr'd,
 When death shall lay that honour'd body low?

SOCRATES.

Just as you please, do with it as you will---
 Corruption claims that part of Socrates,
 This carcase is it's prey---but t'other part
 Came down from heav'n, and thither shall return
 To live with spirits of congenial form---
 O! be it then your care to keep your souls
 Immaculate and pure, an offering meet
 For Him who form'd them, when his wisdom deigns
 To summon them to render an account

N

Of

Of what they did on earth while here confin'd
To perishable frames, too apt to draw
The soul aside, and lead it into vice!

S C E N E IV.

Enter a MESSENGER from PLATO.

MESSENGER.

To thee, O Socrates, does Plato make
A tender of his heart---uncommon pains
Have seiz'd his limbs, and render him unfit
To pay his duty here, else would he spend
His hours with thee, while yet thou dost subsist,
Tho' in a prison; and with gladness hear
Thy wisdom-flowing tongue, which oft' has charm'd
His list'ning ear, and warm'd his glowing breast
With soul-enraptur'd fire: his grateful heart
O'erflows with thanks for thy benevolence
And friendly care, which gave a happy turn
To his young mind, and rais'd his grov'ling soul
From sordid earth, to dignity and worth.

SOCRATES.

Plato is worthy of my tenderest wish
And high regard: O may the God I serve
Give him to live, 'till he has run his course
Of virtue here! his tow'ring genius soars
Like eagles on the wing, when toward heaven

They

They rise in rapid flight, and view the sun
 In his meridian blaze: Plato has drank
 Deep at my spring, and knows the moral source
 From whence it flows: to him and Xenophon
 I pour'd out all my soul, and found a soil
 Fit to receive the seeds I meant to sow
 In generous minds, by nature form'd to taste
 Propriety and order: for I chose
 The tablets of the heart whereon to stamp
 My living precepts, rather than to use
 The skins of beasts---should my lov'd Plato write
 Aught of his Socrates; his candid pen
 Will fair describe the master and the friend---
 * O Xenophon! thy fate has call'd thee forth
 To noble deeds of arms; at thy return
 Athens shall shine in fair historic page;
 Nor thy old Socrates be left unprais'd.
 O! may they live in peace! may ministers
 Of light attend them thro' the dreary vale
 Of this dark world, 'till we shall meet above,
 Never to part again! there shall our souls
 From bond of body free, range uncontroul'd

* Xenophon was about that time conducting that memorable retreat of the ten thousand Greeks from the remotest part of Persia into their own country---which retreat of six hundred and twenty leagues, was made in one hundred and twenty-two days marches, and in the space of eight months, of which the whole honour is almost due to himself, as well in regard to the advice and good conduct, as in relation to the command of the enterprize.

Thro' pure etherial space, and thence survey
With true delight all sublunary things.

MESSENGER.

Thou honour'd sage, adieu!

SOCRATES.

Adieu, good man!

Health to my Plato---Bid him bear in mind
Our moral converse, and pursue the path
Which leads where truth and probity preside:
Bid him not mourn for me---I wait with joy
The coming hour!---O! may this happy day
For ever shine in the records of fame,
And shew the merits of my blameless life!

MESSENGER.

With faithful care I will relate to Plato
The purport of thy words---once more adieu.

[Exit.

SOCRATES.

O Crito! O my friends! tell Xenophon,
I gladly would have seen him ere the power
Of speech was lost---he fairly trac'd my soul
By all it's reas'ning clues, and hope he holds
My moral precepts fully in his view,
To guide his conduct thro' this vale of woe.

CRITO.

Thy orders, Socrates, shall be obey'd;
And he shall be acquainted with the whole,
From thy appearance in the court, 'till death
Shall close those eyes.

SOCRATES.

SOCRATES.

I hope he'll hear thy tale
Without concern, save what our friendship claims,
The goodly offspring of united minds.

S C E N E V.

Enter GOALER.

GOALER.

This is the destin'd hour, when you must take
The fatal cup.

SOCRATES.

Pray what is to be done
When I have ta'en the draught ? for I would choose
To die as I'm directed.

GOALER.

Walk about
'Till you begin to find your failing legs
Grow weary of their load, then lie supine
Upon your bed, to give the liquor leave
To check the blood, and operate with force.

SOCRATES.

Come, give it me :---that welcome precious cup,
That cordial to the soul of Socrates,
That sweet release from anxious care and toil,
I joyous hold ; by this shall I ascend
The habitations of the just, beyond
The reach of malice---I already soar---

Already

Already see---(what beam divine is this !)
 The mansions open, where the blest shall reign
 In robes of glory---Friend,---say, can I spare
 As much of this kind potion as would make
 A small libation.

GOALER.

I prepar'd the dose
 Just of sufficient force to make thy end
 As easy as I could.

SOCRATES.

I thank thee, friend---
 Thy visitations since I hither came
 Have been humane and kind---tho' nought, thou say'st,
 Can from this cup be spar'd ; yet I may pour
 My prayers forth to the great God who rules
 In heaven and earth supreme, that he may make
 My exit from this world, and the last stage
 Of life as easy as his wisdom deems
 Most proper for me----

*[Here Socrates stands silent for a short time,
 and then drinks the cup with amazing tran-
 quility.]*

---Be thy blessed will
 For ever mine ! Parent of heaven and earth,
 And all the breathing forms that live in Thee,
 To Thee I render back what cannot die !
 From Thee it came, and does to Thee return,
 In hope of kind acceptance from the God
 Who gave it pow'r to think ! O may he guard

The

The offspring of his goodness, rais'd to do
 His will on earth, and crown it with reward
 Where reigns beatitude without alloy !---
 Now must I walk about----a little time
 Will set me free from earth----

*[When he had drunk the draught he looked about
 and saw his friends weeping.]*

Ah ! where my friends,
 Is now your virtue's wonted strength ? for this
 I sent away the women, lest *their* eyes
 Should flow with tears of weakness ; I have taught
 That men should die in peace, and bless the gods
 For their departure hence, who have prepar'd
 A better life for all who firmly tread
 The paths of virtue, and pursue the way
 That leads to heav'n---O ! may my demeanour,
 My steady practice in this awful hour,
 This hour, that verges on eternity,
 Be such as Socrates himself would praise !---
 Shall this divorce my weary soul from earth---
 Transcendent drug---this trivial simple draught---
 This trampled weed consign me to the stars !
 ---So bountiful is nature---Cease to weep---
 My countrymen, my friends---rather rejoice,
 Rejoice with Socrates---his triumph share---
 No shade of doubt remains, 'tis day-light all---
 'Tis heaven itself unfolds---O wider yet
 Unfold that glorious gate, the courts of light---
 I see, I see---no mortal tongue can utter---

I spring,

I spring, I soar, I mingle with the blest---

[*He grows faint.*

And yet---but friendship comes from heav'n, farewell.

Nature forgoes her gripe---I feel---I feel

Her slacken'd hand---thou potent, friendly draught---

My soul is half enlarg'd---embrace me---help me---

Hold, hold me up---ye winged ministers---

To Thee, thou God supreme---to Thee I give---

Thou source of life---but O my soul is thine---

Take back this portion of thyself---take back---

Let Socrates be thine---for ever---

[*Expires.*

CRITO.

I'll do the last kind office to my friend,

I'll close his eyes that set in shades of night,

And see his funeral obsequies perform'd.---

[*Exeunt omnes.*

CHORUS of etherial SPIRITS.

Hail, Innocence, thou heav'n-born maid !

Before thee walks a virgin train,

In virtue's fairest robes array'd,

White as the milky way unknown to soil or stain.

Behind, Content with smiling face,

Fair meek-ey'd nymph, holds on her way,

Pursues thee with an even pace,

And from thy cheering path does never devious stray.

At

At thy command relentless death,
 Daughter of Erebus and night,
 Yet pleas'd awaits thy latest breath;
 And sees the soul ascend on beams of silver light.

There in fable weeds array'd
 All that of Socrates could die,
[Pointing to the dead body.]
 Releas'd from mortal care is laid;
 Of parts terrene compos'd, and alien from the sky.

But as we hither sped our way,
 We saw the living part ascend,
 Bright as the pure etherial ray,
 And tow'rd the court of heav'n, with soaring effort tend.

Him soon, when rage and envy cease;
 When reason hath resum'd her throne,
 And cooler thoughts give passion ease;
 Athens shall mourn in tears, and wish the deed undone.

To him they shall choice statues raise,
 With ornamental sculpture grac'd,
 Fair meed of worth and virtue's praise,
 To his immortal fame in the * Pompeian plac'd.

* This was one of the houses belonging to the republic of Athens, called the house of pomps, because it was particularly appointed for the preparation of their pomps and ceremonies.---

Diogenes statue of Socrates.

To him rich shrines shall honour pay,
Erected by decrees of state ;
To him shall injur'd suppliants pray---
So will the Gods above, and what they will is fate.

T H E E N D.